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FROM THE MINISTRY OF

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**THRU** the **BIBLE**

# Rest Assured

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CONQUERING YOUR DOUBTS  
ABOUT YOUR SALVATION

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**DR. J. VERNON MCGEE**

# REST ASSURED

## CONQUERING YOUR DOUBTS ABOUT YOUR SALVATION

Peace of mind cannot be wrapped in a box, decorated with paper and ribbon. But to every Christian, God gives this valuable gift. Millions long for it, but find it just out of reach. This intangible prize, a real gift of the spiritual realm, is of inestimable value and is purchased only by the blood of Jesus Christ.

**This gift is the confidence and absolute certainty that God has saved you. You know for certain that your relationship with God is secure forever.**

Is this possible? Can you know with certainty that you are saved and are forever a child of God?

For years, my soul tossed on the troubled sea of uncertainty and insecurity. Finally, Philippians 1:6 dawned on my darkened mind like shafts of light penetrating the dark recesses of fear and doubt:

**Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**

If you fear whether or not you're saved, I want you to know this: This confidence in God and the assurance of His gift of eternal life is your rightful possession. God wants you to have it as your portion. If this is not an issue you struggle with, then allow these words to further strengthen the fabric of your faith.

# ETERNAL SECURITY— WHAT IS IT?

Let's first understand the clear distinction between eternal security and assurance of salvation.

Eternal security is an objective fact.

Your assurance of salvation is a subjective experience.

Some things are true no matter what. For example: Neither you nor I were at the Battle of Bunker Hill, but it's a fact in American history. Whatever we think or feel about it doesn't impact the fact that it happened. Eternal security is an objective fact like that; it's established and sure. It exists apart from experience or emotion.

Eternal security rests upon what God says; it depends on God's faithfulness:

***He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*** –1 John 5:12

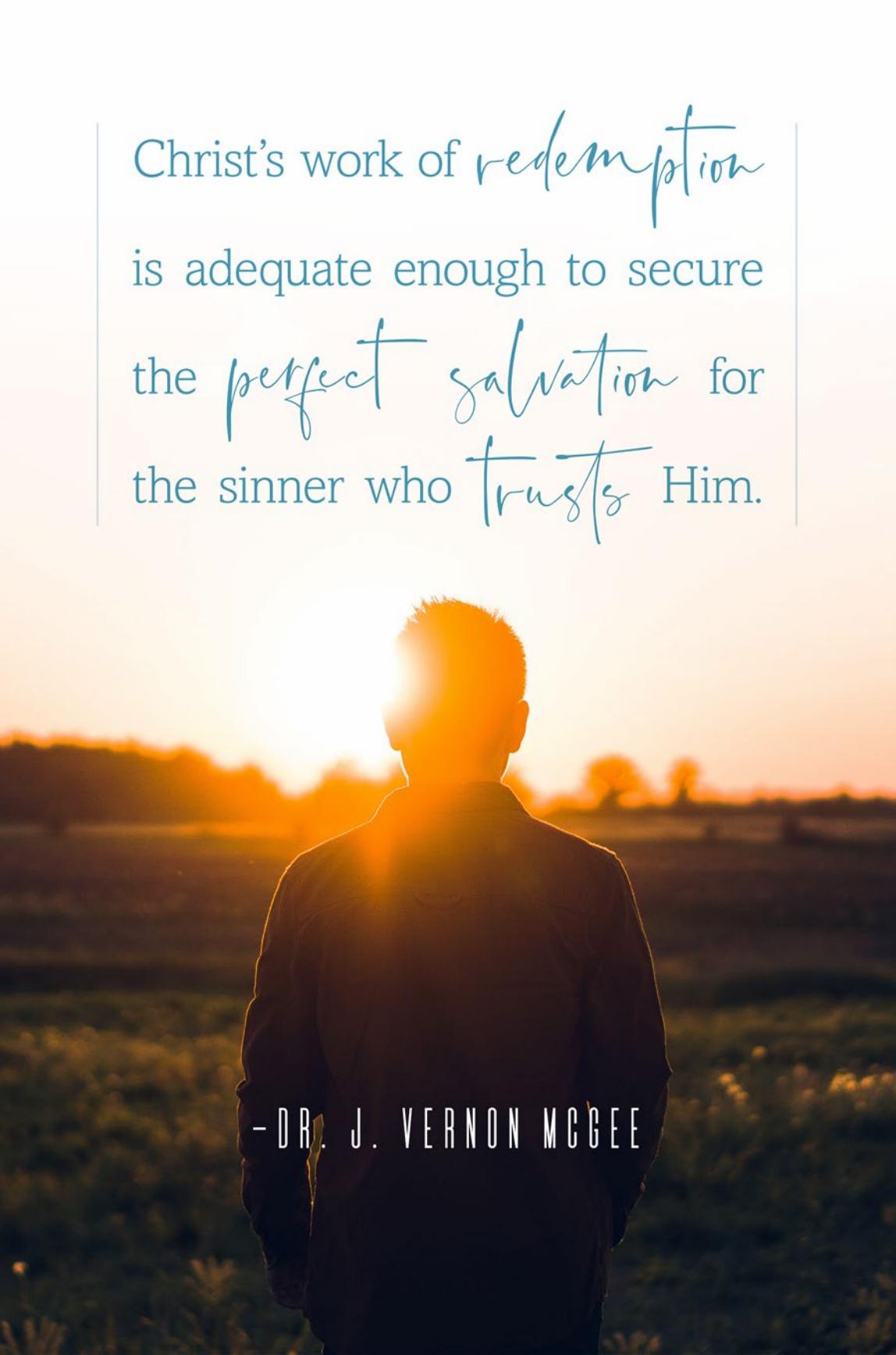
God declares this certainty in the most wonderful statement in (or out of) the Bible:

***There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus .... Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*** –Romans 8:1a, 33-34

Every sinner who has trusted in Jesus stands behind the throne of God. Christ's work of redemption is adequate enough to secure the perfect salvation for the sinner who trusts Him. If not, then the work of Christ was not a finished transaction. In that case, it must be written down as "unfinished business." However, God Himself wrote over the cross of Jesus Christ, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30).

God offers eternal life—everlasting life—to those who believe in Jesus Christ. This gift is given the moment you believe, but it continues through eternity. It is not temporary or uncertain or paid out over time. It's completely yours the moment you trust Jesus Christ.

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# MY PERSONAL REALIZATION

I was once on a flight from Los Angeles to Phoenix. The plane hit rough air and began to bounce around. The pilot tried to get us out of it by going higher, but it only got rougher up there, so he leveled off. At times the plane would drop, and it seemed to me like it would never stop. I grabbed the seat in front of me and held on for dear life. But across the aisle from me sat a man who was a former pilot, and he'd fallen asleep by the time the plane even took to the air. When we hit that turbulence, he was merely annoyed by all the disturbance and turned over and went back to sleep. After we landed he said he'd actually enjoyed the flight! I certainly could not say the same.

Now, I was just as safe on that airplane as the other man—whatever security the plane offered was mine as well as his. We both had faith enough to enter the plane, but he had the understanding and experience to enjoy the trip. He had *assurance*, but I did not.

Now, let's apply this lesson to the very important reality of your salvation. My friend, God wants you to enjoy and be assured of your relationship with Him. His "plane" cannot fall, and you do not have to hold on to the seat in front of you—He holds you!

If you've ever experienced "inner turbulence" regarding your salvation, I invite you to take these two important truths to heart.

TRUTH #1:

YOU ARE GOD'S CHILD THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

If you have accepted God's offer of eternal life, then you can be assured of it. Some Christians believe in the security of the believer but do not themselves have the assurance of their salvation. To that I say, "*My brethren, these things ought not to be so*" (James 3:10). God will not go back on His promise to save you. Put your misgivings, doubts, and a lack of assurance out on the curb.

Remember this: You are His child through faith in Jesus Christ.

***But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*** –John 1:12, 13

Did you see that? Your salvation is of God. You did not earn it, therefore you can do nothing to lose it. When talking about salvation, remove words like "maybe" and "perhaps" from your vocabulary. God doesn't offer a "hope so" salvation—His is a "know so" salvation. Your salvation is not temporary or conditional; God's Word describes it as everlasting or eternal life.

Be assured by what God actually says:

***He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 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.*** –1 John 5:12, 13

***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 10:22

What gives us this certain confidence in our salvation?

TRUTH #2:  
JESUS' RIGHTEOUSNESS GIVES YOU  
YOUR SECURE STANDING WITH GOD

Your standing before God cannot be improved upon because it is through Jesus and He is in perfect fellowship with God. It cannot be disturbed because it is given wholly to the lost sinner who trusts in Jesus. (Read Isaiah 32:17.)

God wants all who trust Christ to experience salvation in such a way that they say confidently, boldly, and with much assurance:

***... I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.***

–2 Timothy 1:12

Don't miss the best God has for you. Spend your life going deeper in your understanding and appreciation of His "so great a salvation" (Hebrews 2:3).

***My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.*** –John 10:27-29

He never lets go. Relax, believer, and enjoy your salvation.

God will not  
go back on  
His promise to  
save you.

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# WHY DO WE DOUBT?

But what if you still doubt? What could be the reason you don't feel confident in God's gift? Let's look at some common reasons. As you read, ask God's Spirit to show you what you need to surrender to Him.

## SAVED IN FEAR

Sometimes frightened souls receive the gospel in trembling and fear, but they do not understand (or the gospel wasn't fully presented) that they could have full confidence in Jesus' work on their behalf.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about this kind of preaching in their city:

***For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.***

-1 Thessalonians 1:5

The gospel that produces changed lives comes in “much assurance.” Many who lack assurance are sincere, but they have actually never been born again.

While I was a pastor, a young couple who had come out of a liberal church background approached me after a service and exclaimed with great joy, “We received the assurance of our salvation tonight!” The next week they came up to me, smiling, and said, “Correction: We did not get the assurance of our salvation last week; we got saved.”

They were thrilled as they related their experience of going home the week before, getting down on their knees, and actually receiving Christ as Savior. This experience gave them assurance. This is the manner in which God intends the gospel to come to men and women—“in much assurance.”

### CAUGHT UP BY EMOTION

For some, the gospel has not been given to them accurately, and they depend on the emotion of the moment for a salvation experience. They don't really understand their salvation. When emotions wear thin and they don't have truth to rest on, then doubts and uncertainty disturb their hearts.

Many do not know the assurance contained in the gospel:

***That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ.*** –Colossians 2:2

Another experience from my days as a pastor clarifies this point. One Easter Sunday, two couples came forward at the invitation. One couple was overcome with emotion; the other couple was quite stoical. The first couple was so emotional, they could hardly speak. The contrast was so great some even doubted the genuineness of the couple who shed no tears.

# DON'T MISS *the best* GOD HAS FOR YOU.

SPEND YOUR LIFE GOING DEEPER IN YOUR  
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OF HIS "SO GREAT A SALVATION."



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However, time proved emotion didn't indicate the real conversion experience. The emotional couple soon drifted into a cult and then into another; the couple who seemed to have no emotional experience at all grew in grace and the knowledge of Christ. This couple had the "full assurance of understanding" from the very beginning.

## SIN IGNORED OR UNCONFESSSED

The greatest thief of the assurance of salvation is ignored or unconfessed sin. God wants us to have the full assurance of faith, and this comes experientially through fellowship with Him. Sin breaks our fellowship, which—in time—sets up a chain reaction that breaks our confidence.

***If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*** –1 John 1:6

We can put up a good front, but underneath, doubts gnaw at our faith. We wonder if we really are God's children. Yet God is still our Father, and a conviction of sin is pretty good evidence of it. We have lost our fellowship with Him, and therefore our assurance—but *not* our salvation.

When we're ignoring sin in our lives, we dread the light because it makes us more aware of our doubts. But when we come into the light, the Word of God, it reveals our sin and shows us the remedy.

***But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*** –1 John 1:7

The blood of Christ is powerful. It's the basis on which our sin can be forgiven.

Look what happens when we confess our sin to God:

***If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*** –1 John 1:9

Immediately, God restores the fellowship between us. With the family fellowship resumed, our confidence and assurance is restored.

You see, a real child of God hates sin in his life, because he knows it breaks fellowship with God. Hating sin sets us apart from those who don't know God:

***In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.*** –1 John 3:10

Deliberate and continual sinning, without remorse or repentance, clearly indicates that you are not a child of God. The child of God hates the sin in his life and longs to be delivered from it, because the legitimate believer can never compromise with sin.

# HOW CAN I KNOW FOR SURE?

Want to test yourself? Want this confidence? Want to know for sure you are God's child? In 2 Corinthians 13:5, God urges us to:

***Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.***

Here's how you can know. Ask yourself these questions:

## DO I WANT TO OBEY GOD?

The child of God longs to obey God and please Him; that desire gives you assurance you are His:

***Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.*** –1 John 2:3

A genuine believer knows the *will* of God, and therefore wants to know the *Word* of God:

***Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.... I hate the double-minded, but I love Your law.... I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure.*** –Psalm 119:97, 113, 162

First comes an appetite for the Word of God, then as the believer begins to understand it, growth takes place:

***But he who is spiritual judges*** [understands] ***all things, yet he himself is rightly judged*** [understood] ***by no one.*** –1 Corinthians 2:15

## IS PRAYER REAL TO ME?

A reality in prayer is evidence we are children of God. John tells us,

***And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.*** –1 John 3:19

As a believer approaches the Father, a holy boldness confirms the heart. This is not presumption—it is the assurance a child has in approaching a father. When our hearts are rightly related to Him, God gives us confidence:

***Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.*** –v. 21

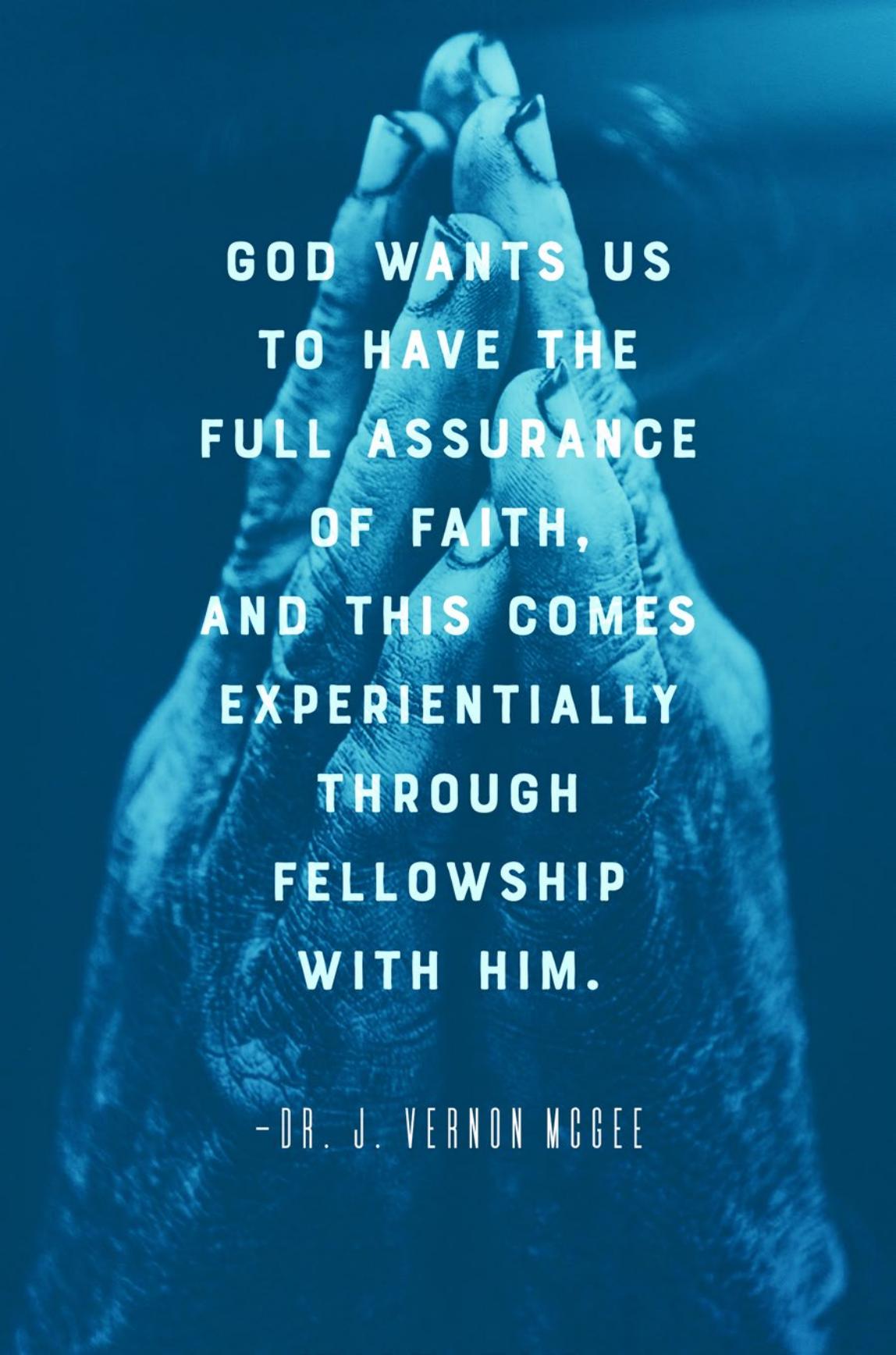
And when a child of God is in His will, he or she gets added benefits:

***And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*** –v. 22

Answered prayer is an argument that one is a legitimate child of God. The prayer life of the believer is vital in assuring the soul of salvation.

However, sin or some other impediment may make us reluctant to approach the Father. But because of our position in Christ, God hears us regardless of our condition:

***For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.*** –v. 20



**GOD WANTS US  
TO HAVE THE  
FULL ASSURANCE  
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AND THIS COMES  
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## DO I HAVE A LOVE AND CONCERN FOR PEOPLE?

A love for the brethren and a passion for the souls of men are more evidence we are children of God.

One of the most convicting and confirming facts sealing assurance to the heart is love of the brethren. Scripture makes this clear:

***We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.*** –1 John 3:14

***These things I command you, that you love one another.***

–John 15:17

Animosity and hatred in the heart rob the child of God of assurance. Malice toward another Christian produces bitterness of soul, which is not a fertile soil to cultivate assurance. Lack of love for another believer robs more Christians of real enjoyment and satisfaction in the Christian life than perhaps any other single factor. It not only blights the soul of the Christian, but it also destroys any public testimony:

***“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*** –John 13:35

Do not let a little root of bitterness rob you of assurance. Make things right with other believers.

The genuine believer also desires for those outside the fold to come to a saving knowledge of Christ. It is impossible for Christ—the One who died for sinners—to be in the heart and there not be a longing for the salvation of sinners.

A sterile and frigid Christian is not likely to experience the sweetness and joy of full assurance. But a vital Christian, who knows something of the Savior’s compassion, will find the joy of belonging.

## AM I CONSCIOUS OF BEING HIS CHILD?

A consciousness that we are children of God is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit and not psychological presumption:

***By this know we that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.*** –1 John 4:13

We may not be aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit, but we are aware of His work in us. The Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself, but He speaks of Christ:

***However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*** –John 16:13

A counterfeit humility is popular today. It sounds very pious, but it is not genuine. It says we are to grovel in the dust and act like worms before God—this is the modern way of putting on sackcloth and ashes. It is true we are sinners and that we have no good within us, no good comes out of us, and we have nothing in which to glory save the cross of Christ.

Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit does not bear witness with our spirit that we are the “worms” of God. No, “*the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*” (Romans 8:16). He encourages us when we are in times of weakness and trembling, and in spite of all our failure says we are the children of God.

Paul says something remarkable:

***For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”*** –Romans 8:15

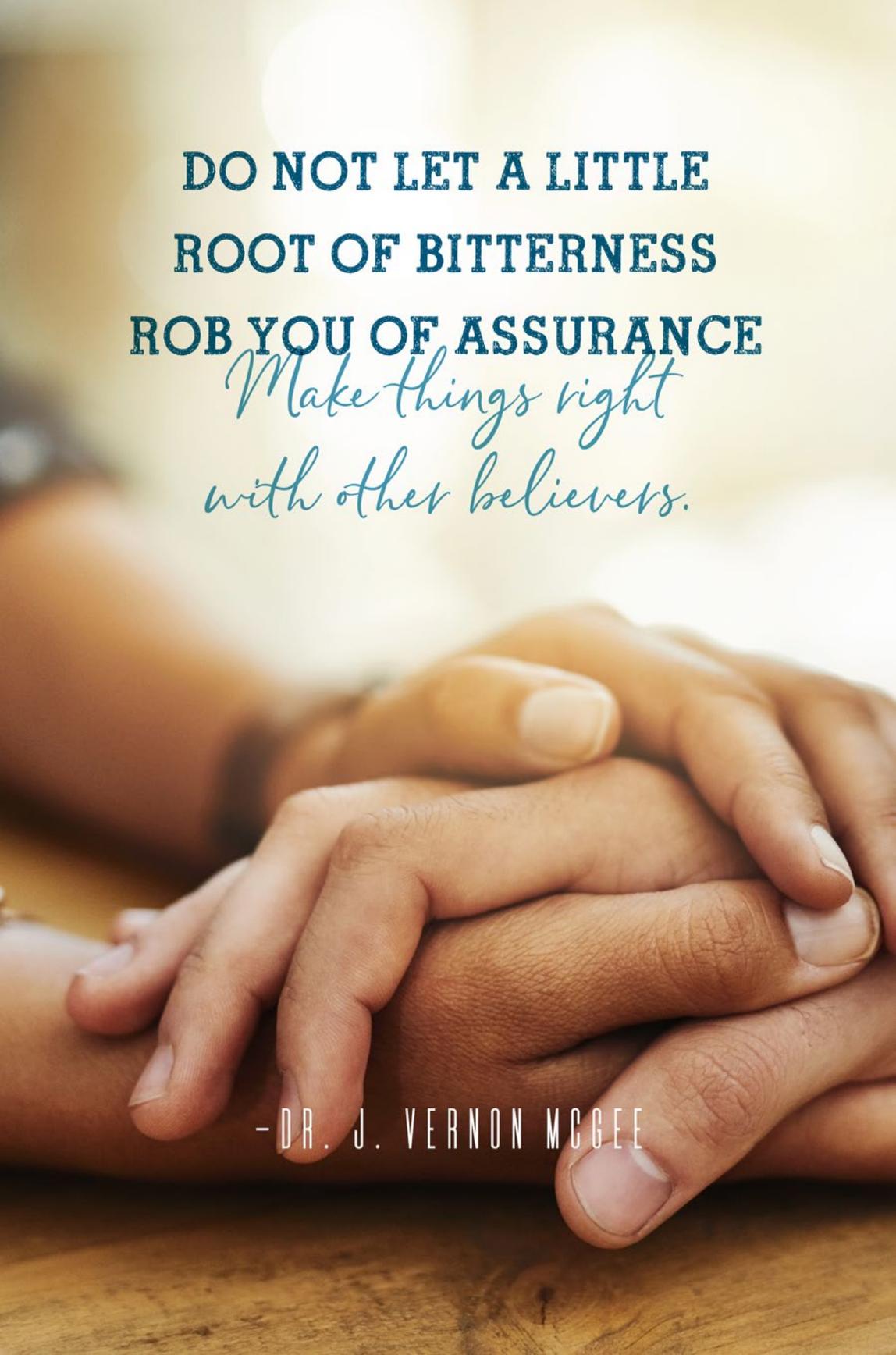
*Abba*, an Aramaic word, is very personal and could be translated “my Daddy.” We don’t use this word in reference to God because some think it sounds overly familiar with Him. But the Spirit

affirms it and causes us to realize God is our very own Father through regeneration and by adoption.

Dr. George Truett told a story of a widower bringing his young daughter home after her mother's funeral. The father tucked the little one in bed and, thinking the little girl was asleep, cried aloud in his grief, "Oh, God, it is dark down here."

The child cried out, "Daddy, it is dark over here, too." The father laid down with her and tried to soothe her sobbing. Then she reached over in the darkness and felt his face. "Daddy," she said, "I can go to sleep if your face is toward me." Being assured his face was toward her, she soon dropped off to sleep. The anxious father thought over this display of simple faith and called out again, "Oh, God, it is dark down here, but I can bear it if I know Your face is toward me."

In a time of darkness, the Holy Spirit confirms to the sad spirit of the believer that he is a child of God, and the heavenly Father does not turn His face from His own. His eyes are on you.



**DO NOT LET A LITTLE  
ROOT OF BITTERNESS  
ROB YOU OF ASSURANCE**

*Make things right  
with other believers.*

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## WHEN DID I BELIEVE?

Perhaps your soul remains anxious because you can't establish with certainty a moment in time when you had a transforming salvation experience with God. Multitudes suffer in uncertainty because they hear others testify to a day, a moment, and a place when they passed from death into life. If you had such an experience, it certainly must be gratifying. But many others can't say when it happened, yet they know they are born-again believers. You don't have to have a specific date for your "second birthday."

I cannot put my finger on the moment I was converted. As a boy, I went to an altar under a brush arbor, but no one thought to speak to me about my soul or explain the way of salvation. The devil used this to disturb my mind whenever I heard someone testify to a transforming experience. That master of doubt and deception would lean over my shoulder and whisper, "*How do you know you have really been saved?*"

I discovered a solution to this problem when I was in seminary. When the devil whispered into my ear, I started saying to him, "*Perhaps you are right. But you are witness here and now that I accept Christ as my Savior with all my heart. Now I am a child of God.*" The devil stopped disturbing me on this issue.

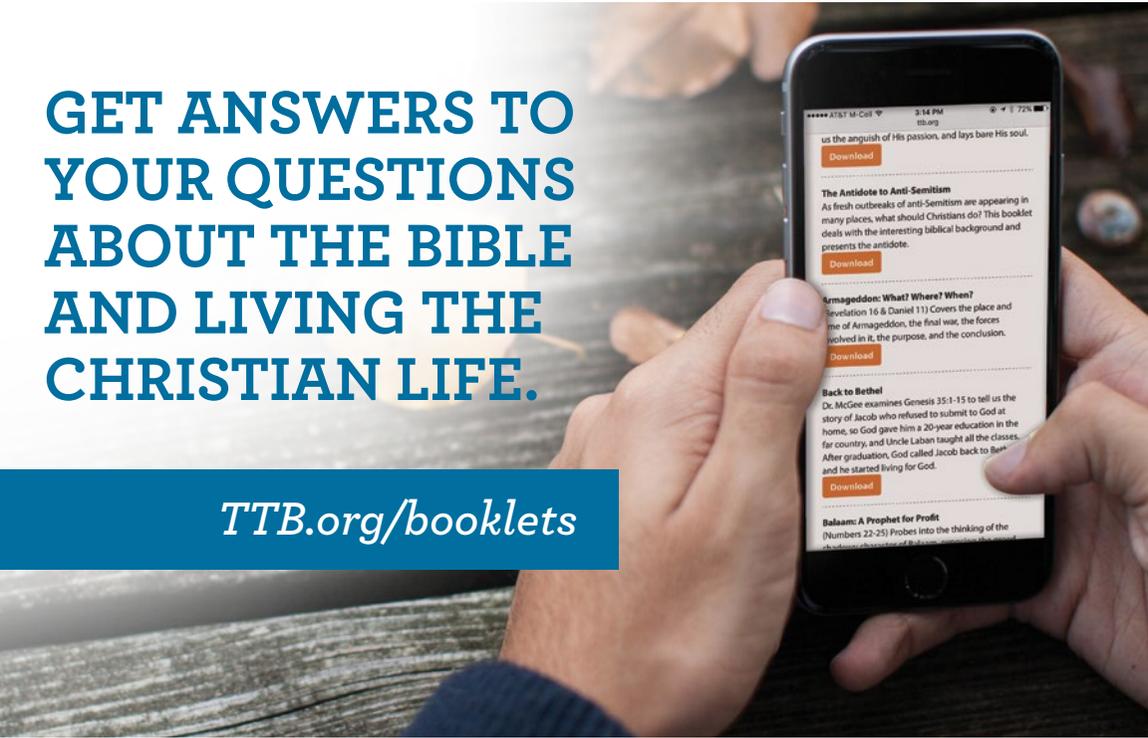
If this is your difficulty, too, accept Christ this very moment. Assure your heart and have the peace of God right now. Do not look for an experience. Do not probe your feelings. Just believe God. Take Him at His Word and trust His faithfulness.

Christ says, “*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out*” (John 6:37). Just come to Him.

A photograph of two men, one Black and one white, smiling and talking to each other outdoors. They are both gesturing with their hands as if in conversation. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and greenery.

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