

How Do I Know If I've Done Enough Good Works to be Saved? - NKJV

By Karen Sue Nyquist

God wants people of all religions, cultures, and races to come to Him. The Bible, His Word, tells us how. We can turn to it to find answers to our questions.

1. How can we know that the Bible is reliable, that it was translated accurately?

a) Translators have early copies in the original languages. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek experts have translated the newer English translations from those manuscripts, not from previous translations, ensuring their accuracy. (All verses in this article are from the New King James Version. You are encouraged to check out more recent English translations if you prefer. The wording is often easier to understand.) **Read the Bible!** You can start with the New Testament.



b) Almighty God promised that He would preserve His word. "The words of the Lord are pure words ... You shall keep them, O Lord, You shall preserve them from this generation forever" (Psalm 12:6-7). **Trust the Bible, it's God's Word.**

2. **What about other religious books?** God kept things simple, He only wrote one holy scripture. Only the Bible is God's Word, which He preserved and kept pure. He said, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2). He gave it through His Jewish prophets and apostles. Writing other books and following them as though they are sacred is definitely "adding" to His word.

3. **What does the Bible mean by "salvation" or "to be saved"?** - The Bible says salvation means to: be reconciled to God, have our sins forgiven, and have everlasting life with God in heaven. Good news! We don't earn salvation with good works, it's a gift from God. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

4. **How does Jesus Christ's death make salvation possible for us? "Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us"** (Ephesians 5:2).

a) **Jesus' death reconciles us to God** - "But your iniquities (*sins, bad thoughts, and behaviors*) have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10). God wants to adopt us (Romans 8:15). We can even call Him, "Father" (Matthew 6:9).

b) **Jesus' death forgives our sins** - Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins. - Jesus said, "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission (*payment*) of sins" (Matthew 26:28). **What should we do if we sin again?** "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).

c) **Jesus' death gives us everlasting, eternal life, starting here on earth** - Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24). Our bodies may die, but our soul and spirit live on! **Where?** In heaven!

d) **Jesus' death allows us go to heaven to be with God** - "In My Father's house (*heaven*) 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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3).

5. **So, what good works should I do to be saved?** - Salvation comes from God, not from our good works. But we do need to believe the word of God. "So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Then, we can respond to it. "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved**. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). **Conclusion:** The word of God leads us, not our heart (feelings); but our heart can respond to God's Word with faith. We can't trust our heart because, "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). But we can trust the Bible!





6. **Just believing sounds too simple. Don't I have to do good works too, to be saved?** - The Bible says: "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His *(God's)* mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). We can never do enough good works to earn salvation.

a) **"The gospel of Jesus Christ" is a free gift from God** - "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us" (Ephesians 2:4). It would be an insult trying to pay someone for a gift they're giving us, likewise we can't pay God for salvation even with good works. We just gratefully and humbly believe and accept it.

b) **"The gospel of works" is another gospel** - The early church was being troubled by people who were saying you must also do works to be saved. Paul responded, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel" (Galatians 1:6). "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28). Paul warns, "You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt* to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4). "But to him who does not work but believes on Him *(God)* who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5). Adding good works in order to be saved, changes the gospel into another gospel.

7. **But why then does the Bible say, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead"** (James 2:17)? - James is explaining that true faith leads to good works, but he's not saying that good works lead to salvation. Paul explains it this way. 1st - "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God*, not of works, lest anyone should boast. 2nd - When we are saved, the Holy Spirit comes into us (Acts 5:32) and starts working on us from the inside, then we will do good works. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10).

8. **What about repentance?** - Repentance is important. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, 'Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matthew 4:17). Paul wrote, "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20). Spiritual growth is important. After salvation, we cooperate with God's Holy Spirit as He works in us. "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). God is gracious, He gives us time and His help so we can grow spiritually.

9. **Do you have a spiritual hunger? A spiritual thirst?** "And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst'" (John 6:35). "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it more abundantly*" (John 10:10).

10. **We want salvation, what does God want? He wants a loving relationship with us.** He said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and 'your neighbor as yourself'" (Luke 10:27). Will we give Him our heart? Our time? Our attention? Our all? Paul was willing to lose everything he had to be close to Jesus and to know Him. "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:7-8). **Do you want Jesus to be your Lord and Savior?** - If so, you may pray.



Suggested Prayer: "Jesus, I believe You are the Christ, the Son of God, and that You died for my sins, then rose from the dead. I repent of my sins, Thank You for loving me and dying for me. I confess You as my Lord and Savior. Please, help me live in Your will and give me the Holy Spirit. AMEN!" Name _____ Date _____

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