

Can We Really Know?

1. Is it really possible to know we have eternal life?

John wrote that it was possible and that he wanted Christians to know it (1 John 5:13). But how exactly does that work?

Not emotionalism: the Bible doesn't talk about a warm feeling inside when we are saved (though some claim some higher, emotional connection).

Not direct confirmation: God does not send some sign to confirm our salvation (like a certificate in the mail saying, "Congratulations! You are saved!").

Illustration: I never met my grandfather, but I still know him. How is that even possible? Someone I trusted (my mother) told me about him. I did not receive an inward spiritual feeling from his spirit. But I still know he was/is my grandfather.

John wrote in the beginning of the epistle about knowing Christ (1 John 1:1-4) where he heard, saw, and touched Jesus. He personally knew Jesus, and it is that "fellowship" that he wants all Christians to enjoy (1 John 1:3).

So is it possible to know God, to know Christ? John sure thought it was possible for the disciples he was writing to...

Jesus thought it was possible, too - John 17:1-3. Eternal life is "knowing" God and Jesus. This is a great passage to have a better understanding of eternal life. It is much more than a legal standing with God (i.e., having our sins forgiven). Eternal life is all about a deep, committed relationship with God through our "knowing" Him.

2. Why God wants us to know we have eternal life?

Knowing allows us to be confident and not unsure or have doubts about our relationship with God. We know which side of good and evil we walk (walking in the light). It gives us direction so we know where we are going.

We have confidence so our heart does not condemn us (1 John 3:31).

There will be no surprises in heaven. Thought question: will there be anyone in heaven who did not expect to be there?

3. How we can know we have eternal life.

Christ has given us his Spirit - 1 John 3:24; 4:13. The point of God sending his Spirit is so

we don't have to guess what is in the mind of God. He has revealed exactly what he wants us to know. Spend time in learning what God wants us to know.

We can know we have eternal life by doing what Jesus commands us - 1 John 2:3-5. Now that we know what God wants, we need to do what God expects. Do what God says.

Those two things, knowing and doing what God wants, create confidence and a good conscience.

1 John 5:20 (ESV)

²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Closing Thought Questions:

Are you a follower of Jesus? Are you saved?

How do you "know" the answer to the last question?

What is eternal life?

If we can't see God and can't have direct, immediate dialogue with God, how can we come to know Him?

Why does God want us to know Him?

How can we keep from guessing or making assumptions about what God wants us to do in this life?

Would it be just for God to demand or expect something of us that we could not accomplish?

Does God expect us to know Him?