

Does Jesus
Know Me?

Why Can't I
Pray Like
Others?

Why is Studying
the Bible So Hard?

I Keep Sinning, Is
This Normal?

How Do I
Know If My
Sins Are
Forgiven?

I Don't Always
Feel Saved?

Am I Really
Going to
Heaven?

Why is Reading
the Bible is
Boring!

How Do I Know
If I'm Repenting
Correctly?

How Can I
Grow Closer
to God?

How Do I
Become Born
Again?

Am I Truly a
Christian?



Salvation Series

An in-depth Discussion Series with Sister Laraine

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This is the second of many topics in the series 'Salvation' which focuses on questions related to our walk with Christ Jesus.

I pray this will be a blessing in assisting you in your journey to Heaven.

Please share this with everyone you know who could benefit from this series.

Until we meet in God's Glorious Kingdom....Stay Blessed and Stay Ready for of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.– Matthew 24:36-37

With much love,

Sister Laraine

Salvation Series: Question #2: How Do I Know If My Sins Are Forgiven?

People sometimes wonder if they have “done enough” to be forgiven of their sins. Although it does take effort to repent, ultimately we aren’t forgiven because we complete a checklist or do certain tasks. We are forgiven as we accept the mercy offered by Jesus Christ. Most times when people wonder if they have been forgiven is because of the guilt associated with sin.

Guilt is deeply uncomfortable. That’s why most people want to get away from it. It’s the pain that inhibits their pursuit of happiness. Guilt exists because sin exists. Forgiveness for sin is freely offered through Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:9 states; "If we confess our sins, He (GOD) is **faithful** and **just** to **forgive us our sins**, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"

Some people know this, but from time to time they still wonder: **How Do I Know If My Sins Are Forgiven?**

The conviction of sin can bring us to a place of feeling helpless and hopeless. Our shame tempts us to think that no one, much less God, could forgive us. We might wonder how we can go on. What possible hope could there be?

But before we jump right in to answering ‘**How Do I Know If My Sins Are Forgiven**’, we must first understand a few things about forgiveness, starting with it’s meaning:

‘What is Forgiveness?’

Salvation Series: Question #2: How Do I Know If My Sins Are Forgiven?

The word "forgive" means to wipe the slate clean, to pardon, to cancel a debt. When we wrong someone, we seek their forgiveness in order for the relationship to be restored. Forgiveness is not granted because a person deserves to be forgiven. No one deserves to be forgiven. Forgiveness is an act of love, mercy, and grace. Forgiveness is a decision to not hold something against another person, despite what they have done to you.

Forgiveness in the Bible is a “release” or a “dismissal” of something. The forgiveness we have in Christ involves the release of sinners from God’s just penalty and the complete dismissal of all charges against us (see Romans 8:1). Colossians 1:14 says that in God’s beloved Son “we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” The Amplified Bible translates the last phrase like this: “the forgiveness of our sins [and the cancellation of sins’ penalty].” God’s gracious forgiveness of our sin is to be the measure of our gracious forgiveness of others (Ephesians 4:32).

The Bible teaches that when God forgives us, He forgets our sins. It means that He doesn’t hold them against us anymore. In fact, Psalm 103:12 proclaims: As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. Now that we have established what the meaning of forgiveness is, let’s answer the next question:

‘Why Do We Need Forgiveness?’

Salvation Series: Question #2: How Do I Know If My Sins Are Forgiven?

The simple answer is ‘Sin’

The Bible tells us that we are all in need of forgiveness from God. We have all committed sin. Ecclesiastes 7:20 proclaims, "There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins." First John 1:8 says, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." All sin is ultimately an act of rebellion against God (Psalm 51:4). As a result, we desperately need God's forgiveness. If our sins are not forgiven, we will spend eternity suffering the consequences of our sins (Matthew 25:46; John 3:36). Sin is anything that goes against the will of God. It is doing what God has forbidden or not doing what God has commanded we should do. Sin is breaking the law of God. Sin affects every single part of us (John 8:34). It affects our minds, our hearts (Jeremiah 17:9), our emotions, and our spiritual conditions (Proverbs 21:10).

Sin has such a grip on mankind that we cannot free ourselves. We can't even have true affection for God because sin has turned our hearts hard and cold as stone. Understanding sin is the first step towards understanding our need for forgiveness. So now the question we're going to explore is;

‘Forgiveness – How Do We Obtain It?’

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You **CAN'T EARN** forgiveness from God. You **CAN'T PAY** for your forgiveness from God. You **CAN ONLY** receive it, by **FAITH**, through the **GRACE** and **MERCY** of God.

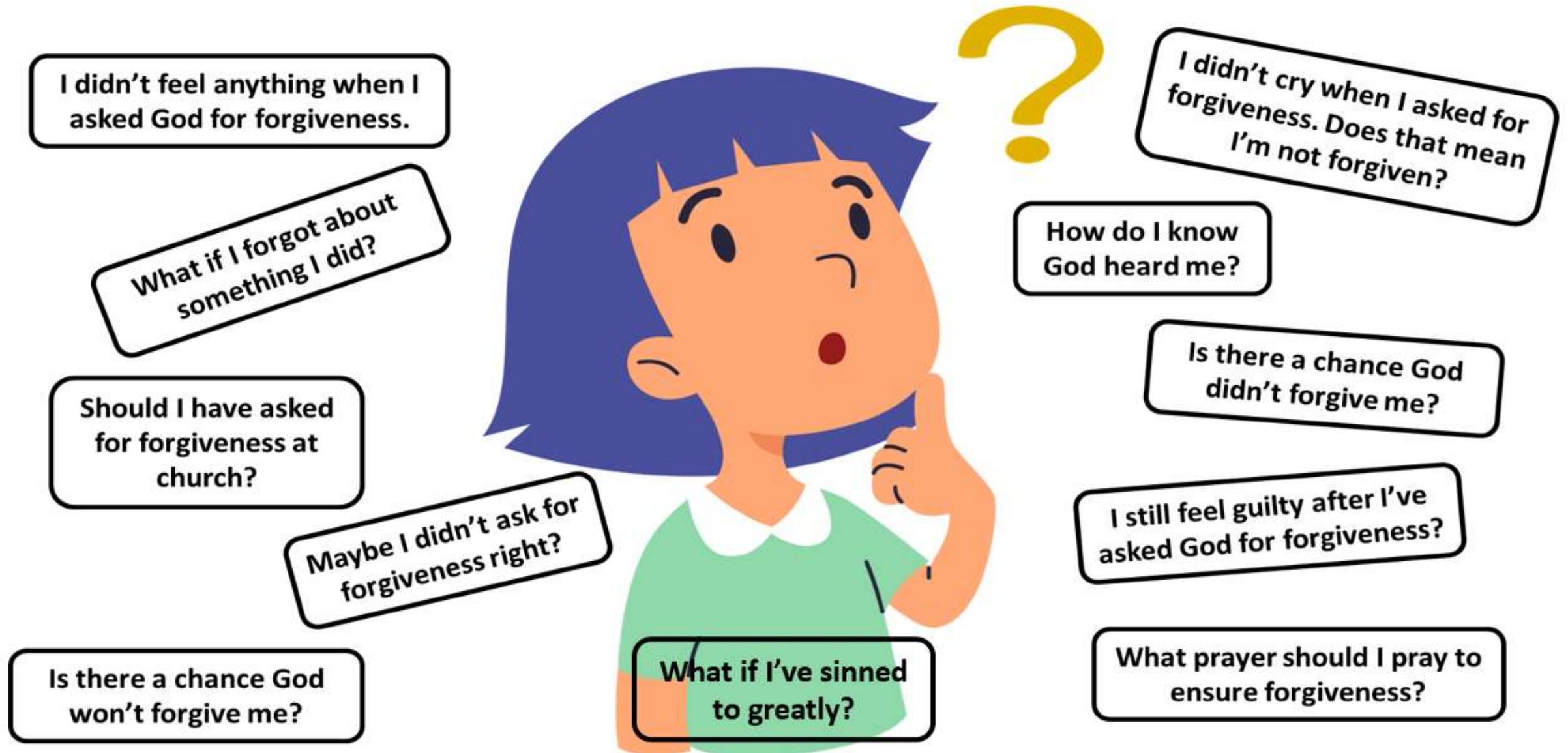
Ephesians 1:7 says, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." Jesus paid our debt for us, so we could be forgiven. All you have to do is ask God to forgive you through Jesus, believing that Jesus died to pay for your forgiveness – and He will forgive you! John 3:16-17 contains this wonderful message, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him." Without the forgiveness of sins, we would be condemned to eternal damnation.

The only just penalty for our sins is death. The first half of Romans 6:23 declares, "For the wages of sin is death..." Eternal death is what we have earned for our sins. God, in His perfect plan, became a human being – Jesus Christ (John 1:1,14). Jesus died on the cross, taking the penalty that we deserve – death. Second Corinthians 5:21 teaches us, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." Jesus died on the cross, taking the punishment that we deserve! As God, Jesus' death provided forgiveness for the sins of the entire world. 1 John 2:2 proclaims, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." Jesus rose from the dead, proclaiming His victory over sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:1-28). In

conclusion: **'We obtain forgiveness through Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.'**

Salvation Series: Question #2: How Do I Know If My Sins Are Forgiven?

Now to answer the question; 'How Do I Know If My Sins Are Forgiven?' Some have had these thoughts...



Salvation Series: Question #2: How Do I Know If My Sins Are Forgiven?

Forgiveness is a problem for many people due to their misunderstanding of what forgiveness involves and confusion about what forgiveness really is. Part of the issue is that sometimes we are unable to distinguish between forgiveness and feeling forgiven. Sometimes our feelings can get out of sync with the reality of forgiveness.

A man once said he was feeling greatly distressed because of his guilt. He said that he had committed a particular sin and had prayed and prayed about it but hadn't received any relief. He wanted to know what he had to do to experience God's forgiveness because he doesn't feel any different.

Can you identify the problem?

God says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). When we don't believe that God has in fact forgiven us when we have confessed our sin, we are calling into question His faithfulness. We are saying that God's promise cannot be trusted. That is supreme arrogance, so we need to ask God's forgiveness for our refusing to believe His promise. But...

There is more to this problem about forgiveness.

Salvation Series: Question #2: How Do I Know If My Sins Are Forgiven?

When God declares that a person is forgiven, that person is in fact forgiven. Our lack of feeling forgiven does not diminish the reality of what God has done. When we confess our sin and ask God for forgiveness through Christ Jesus, we can be assured that He has forgiven us.

‘Forgiveness is objective, but the feeling of forgiveness is subjective.’

How we view forgiveness is based on what we believe. Do we believe our feelings, which are subjective, or the Word of God, which is objective truth? The Christian must live practically each day by the Word of God rather than by their

feelings. The issue of forgiveness is not whether we feel forgiven, but whether **we believe**

God has forgiven us based on HIS WORD.

God promises that, when we come to Him confessing our sin and asking for forgiveness, He freely grants it to us for the sake of Jesus Christ (1 John 1:9). But...

Beware!

Salvation Series: Question #2: How Do I Know If My Sins Are Forgiven?

 **Don't fall into Satan's trap!** 

Satan is an expert at rubbing our noses in our past sins and trying to make us feel our sins are too terrible or great for God to pardon. He knows how to plague Christians by masking the truth (“You have sinned greatly against God in thousands of ways...”) with a lie (“...Therefore you have no hope of salvation”). When he begins to whisper this lie, remember that in Scripture Jesus welcomes the worst of sinners that are willing to receive HIM and rest upon HIM for happiness and blessedness. Those that come to HIM HE will not cast out, be they ever so filthy, sinful, unworthy, or rebellious. When you return to God, that HE will be yours, mercy will be yours, pardon will be yours: ‘For the Lord our God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away HIS face from you, if you return unto HIM (2 Chronicles 30:9).

Read also: Jeremiah. 3:12, Joel 2:13, and Isaiah 55:7. **Christ's heart and arms are wide open to receive you when you come to HIM with a sincere, repented heart.**

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And...here's a prayer we recommend for you to pray:

Father, I confess I have embraced doubt and uncertainty about Your forgiveness. I have allowed my own imperfections to cloud my judgement about what You have done for me. I repent for not trusting Your Word and Your faithfulness. I repent for my lack of gratitude and my own insecurity. Please forgive me for my doubt and unbelief. I will commit to trusting Your Word and embracing Your Love for me. When I am tempted to doubt Your forgiveness, please gently remind me through Your Word that You are a God that doesn't change and has only good thoughts towards me always.

In Jesus Name, I pray...Amen!

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So, if you're still not sure if you are forgiven, allow these scriptures to guide you:

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

Colossians 1:14 - In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins

Ephesians 1:7 - In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

Isaiah 1:18 - Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Hebrews 8:12 - For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

2 Chronicles 7:14 - If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Next in this series: ***How Do I Become Born Again?***