

Q36: What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A36: The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

The assurance of God's love and peace of conscience...

1. Is there such a thing as one having a false assurance of God's love?

John 8:41 (trusting in one's lineage/ethnicity, external church membership)

Matthew 7:22, 23 (trusting in one's religiosity/own works; see also Matthew 23:13-33 and Christ's unrelenting condemnation of hypocrisy)

2. Is there such a thing as one having a genuine assurance of God's love?

2 Timothy 1:12; 4:6-8; 4:16-18 (Paul's confident assurance is surely exemplary for us)

John 5:24 (the reflexive fruit of genuine faith in Christ breeds confidence in God's love)

3. On what basis can you speak of having a genuine assurance of God's love and a true peace of conscience?

God's Expressed Intent and Command Calls Us to Seek It.

1 John 5:13 (God's word is written to you so that you may "know that you have eternal life." Here God encourages us that it is healthy to have assurance, while acknowledging that we may struggle with it.)

Hebrews 6:11 (It is God's express desire and command that we diligently strive to have full assurance.)

The Primary Ground = The W_____ of the Truth of the G_____.

Hebrews 6:17, 18

Romans 5:1, 2

John 3:16, 5:24, 6:35, 6:47, 8:12, 11:25

John 20:30-31(1 John 5:13)

Ground of Confirmation #1 = The T_____ of the H_____ S_____

1 John 4:13

Galatians 4:6

Romans 8:15, 16

Note how this ground drives us back to the primary ground above.

Ground of Confirmation #2 = The F_____ of the S_____ in our lives.

2 Peter 1:4-11

1 John 2:3-5;3:14, 18,19

John 15:1-6

"For every one look at s_____ take ten looks to C_____."

Note how this ground should also drive us back to the primary ground above.

4. How does a genuine assurance of God's love and grace differ from presumption?

Romans 6:1-2 (see also Jude 4)

Titus 1:15-16 compared with 2:11-14

5. Is the believer's degree of assurance of God's love equal at all times and in all circumstances?

Psalm 31:22; Psalm 32:3-5; Psalm 51:10-12
Psalm 88
Isaiah 50:10

6. How does this fluctuation in assurance relate to the grounds of assurance mentioned above?

Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 18
"Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation"

18.1 Although hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God, and estate of salvation; which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; which hope shall never make them ashamed.

18.2 This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God: which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.

18.3 This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto. And therefore it is the duty of everyone to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance: so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

18:4 True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it; by falling into some special sin, which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation; by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness, and to have no light: yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may, in due time, be revived; and by the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.