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Assurance of Salvation

You have decided to entrust your life to Jesus: the most important decision you'll ever make! In doing so, you took a new path, the path that leads to God!

To lay a firm foundation, let's briefly look at what this step really means. First, let's ask ourselves:

1. How can you be certain of Christ's presence in your life?

The moment we ask Jesus to enter into our lives he comes. Read Revelation 3:20 and respond to the following questions:

What should we do?

What does Jesus promise?

When you invited Jesus to come into your life, you have entered into a personal relationship with him. God longs for that relationship to grow and become the most important relationship of your life, like a marriage, a relationship with God is a continuous process of growth. What matters is that this process has really had a beginning and we realize it re-reading Revelation 3:20.

Have you invited Jesus to come into your life?

If yes, where is Jesus now?

How do you know that Jesus is in your life?

On what can you not base this certainty?

2. Now let's look at some of the most important consequences of your decision for Christ. What has happened?

You are a child of God.

What happened, based on John 1:12, when you accepted Jesus into your life?

As a result you did not come into the world as God's child and not even your good works or a Christian family have made you one. Only when you have accepted Christ into your life did you become a child of God and become part of his family.

There are many other people who are children of God: what then is their relationship to you?

You are saved by grace.

Many people have the impression that it's impossible to be saved in such a simple way and without any personal performance. "I need to do something!"

With this in mind, read carefully the passage in Ephesians 2:8-9.

Is salvation a reward for a virtuous life?

How are we (or were we) saved?

How would you explain this in your own words?

Regularly thank God from your heart for your salvation: make it a habit.
Read Colossians 1:12-14, remember your past and use these verses as a model for your own thankfulness.
What happened to your sin according to verse 14?

You have eternal life.

God gave us another fundamental process in John 5:12-13 and John 3:36.

What is it?

When does one have eternal life?

How do you know that you have eternal life?

For how long is it worth?

Perhaps you fear that your life with Jesus is just a good beginning and you wonder how it will end. Will you have the strength to remain united with him?

What does God promise us in Hebrews 13:5b and in John 10:28?

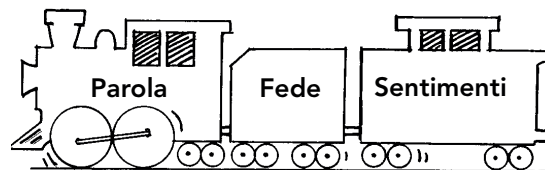
What does this mean for you?

It may seem strange that so much emphasis is put on this certainty, but just as in the construction of a house, where everything depends on a good foundation, the Christian life is very beautiful and free when the believer is "foundationally" certain they are a child of God.

3. Do I always have to feel this way? What is the role of emotions?

The only immutable basis for our assurance of belonging to Jesus are the claims of God in his Word, the Bible. Do not depend your faith by your feelings or experiences because they are changing and unstable. God never goes back on His Word and you can build on it!

The following figure illustrates the relationship between the Word of God (The Bible), faith (our trust in the Word of and the God who said it), and feelings.



The train is hauled by the engine and not by a caboose and, if necessary, can also travel without it. Therefore, what would be the only reliable answer to the question: "How can you be so sure that you have eternal life?"

4. An extraordinary help from God: baptism

When the New Testament speaks of someone who puts their faith in Christ, it always speaks of the fact that they were immediately baptized. Two examples are found in Acts 2:38-41 and 8:35-38. Paul also reminds the believers in Rome of their conversion speaking of baptism (Romans 6:1-4). In the New Testament baptism is always connected to the personal faith of the believer. You could also say that baptism is the outward visible sign of inner conversion to Jesus. It is a sign of faith and a help, because physically we experience something we believe.

Here we cannot deepen the discussion on baptism, its significance and the difficulties encountered in this area, just consider that anyone who makes the decision to live with Christ, should also address the issue of baptism.

What would you like to especially remember in this Step of "Assurance"?

Living with Jesus

In the first step, you learned that Jesus lives in you because you have received him into your life. He has promised never to abandon you and His presence in you means to have "eternal life." None of these things are obtained on the basis of good works, but is a gift that we receive when you put your trust in Jesus.

Now the question is how this relationship works, how you respond, and more importantly what happens when you sin again?

1. How do I act in my relationship with Jesus Christ?

When you accepted Jesus into your life, you became a child of God (as it is written in John 1:12), and according to Revelation 3:20, you have began a close, personal relationship with him, and are now called "christian! "

How do you express this relationship in everyday life?

a) The christian life is a 24/7 commitment.

This does not mean it's a job that lasts day and night, but rather an intense relationship: let Christ participate in every moment of your life, talk to him about your concerns, weights, joys, plans and problems, just like you would your best friend!

What did you talk about with Jesus today?

b) Specifically, the christian life involves the following aspects:

- talking with him: *prayer*
- Him speaking with you: especially through *reading the Bible*
- entering into relationship with other christians: *fellowship*
- learning to do His will: *obedience*

In the long run, your connection with Christ will suffer without one of these elements and in the following paragraphs we will study them in detail. Take the time to share your thoughts and experiences on how these four elements are expressed in a concrete way in your life so far!

2. What happens if I sin again?

A common question that many Christians ask is, "What happens if I sin again, when I do something that God disapproves of? Is my relationship with Jesus interrupted? Does he leave me behind? "

Our answer to these questions will determine our spiritual growth or the possibility that one day we will be beat down and discouraged.

To properly answer these questions we must distinguish between:

- our relationship with God (as His children) e
- our communion with God

a) The basis of our relationship: being children of God

Let's imagine a relationship between a father and son in a family: when a baby comes into the world, he is the son of his father, he has in himself the life of his father and bears his name.

Let's imagine that the son decides to abandon the father to do many things that he would disapprove of or would offend him.

Do these actions cancel out the relationship of sonship between the father and son?

b) Our communion with God

But how about their communion? The child's behavior impedes communion and perhaps destroys it: in any case, contact is broken.

What must the son do to restore communion with the father?

Applied to our relationship with God this means: The relationship of sonship with God remains stable because he is our Father in Jesus Christ, but when we sin our communion with him suffers because God is holy. Through His Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, He speaks to our conscience.

c) What must we do when our communion with God is broken?

Read about it in 1 John 1:5-9.

Verse 5: Why is communion with God inhibited by sin?

Verse 9: What should we do so that our communion with God is restored? At this point it is important to distinguish between our part and the promise of God.

Our part:

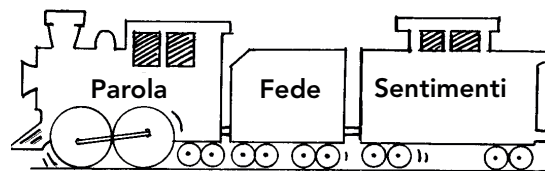
Practically this means be in agreement with God to the judge the sin that we have committed and ask God's forgiveness

The promise of God:

Memorize 1 John 1:9: this verse will really help you because you *will* sin again.

How much time should go by before we ask God to forgive our sins?

How can we know that we've really been forgiven? Consider again this illustration:



The same principle is also true in this context, in fact: Lo stesso principio vale anche in questo contesto, infatti:

3. Summary:

You live in an intense relationship with Jesus Christ, tell him everything that worries you and learn to listen to His voice. When you hear of sin, consider his warning and be obedient. When your communion with Him is hampered by guilt, know that you still remain a child of God, so you can return to him at any time. Your repentance and God's forgiveness immediately restore full communion with Him, every time you do it. Never put off returning to God because what you deal with right away can't oppress you anymore.

Get used to spending time with other Christians, with your "brothers." Look for a spiritual "home", a community of which you can join.

What do you especially want to remember from the step "Living with Jesus"?

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Living in the power of the Holy Spirit

In the previous step you learned that, when you sin again, you always remain a child of God and you can continually experience His forgiveness.

God does not want our lives to be continually "up and down," but wants to transform us so that we learn more and more to live according to his parameters. It definitely doesn't take long to realize you cannot do it yourself: the more you try to do all the will of God, the more you will be forced to admit that your own efforts are not enough.

I can't do it!

Read Romans 7:18-19

What do these verses say?

God knows that by nature we are not able to live a life according to his will, and that's why he has put at our disposition a wonderful help: the Holy Spirit. Only with his power is possible to live as true Christians. The work of the Holy Spirit is so important that God reveals him in the Old Testament as well?

What did God promise in Ezekiel 36: 26-27?

Since the Holy Spirit is something nebulous and undefined for many people, we want to briefly study his character? and his actions. Only then can we truly understand what a great gift God has given us in his Spirit.

1. Who is the Holy Spirit for us?

Read about this in John 14:16-18

What does Jesus promise us in relation to the Holy Spirit?

2. What is the work of the Holy Spirit?

Some of his most important aspects are:

Acts 1:8

Galatians 5:22

How is this expressed in practice?

How can we experience the power of the Holy Spirit in us? We receive the Holy Spirit as a gift at the the time of the new birth, just like the forgiveness of sin. Without the Holy Spirit, one is not a Christian (Romans 8:9). Therefore any person born again does not need to ask to receive the Holy Spirit, but must allow him to fill them (Ephesians 5:18).

We want to examine two ways of living as Christians:

The "Spiritual" Christian

is a person who consciously, day by day, puts Christ at the center of their life and lets the Holy Spirit constantly fill them so that God's characteristics are increasingly visible in their life.



The "Carnal" Christian

instead tries to live with their own power. Many areas of their life are not subject to Christ, and therefore they do not experience the power of the Holy Spirit. This results in frequent or continuous defeat.



Whether our lives as Christians are joyful and successful or weak and frustrated depends decisively on being filled with the Spirit. How can we experience this fullness? In the same way that you have experienced the forgiveness of sin and new life – not performance, but faith! Now, by faith, you can be filled with the Holy Spirit.

3. How can I be filled with the Spirit?

The conditions are:

a. A sincere desire that Christ be in control of every area of your life.

To what does Romans 12:1 call us?

b. Confessing your sins and being purified by God.

c. Prayer to be filled with the Spirit and the faith to accept it. Why do we do this? Because it is God's will and because God has promised us the Holy Spirit.

The clear will of God (Ephesians 5:8)

God's promise (1 John 5:14-15)

To believe means to ask anything according to God's will and accept with confidence that you have received it. Our confidence does not come from special feelings, but from relying on the promises of God.

What does Jesus promise in Luke 11:11-13?

4. But what happens if I sin again?

This is a question that arises in this predicament because sin blocks the action of the Holy Spirit and raises doubts. If you have been disobedient to God, you have sinned and you should "breathe spiritually."

What does "breathing spiritually" mean?

First of all, when you breath, two things happen: exhaling and inhaling.

There also needs to be two movements in the spiritual sense.

Exhale:

I confess any of my sin that I can recall (John 1:9). In practice, this means:

- I agree with the judgment of God and admit my guilt.
- I repent and reject sin inwardly deciding not to commit it again. (The Bible calls this desire for change, "repentance.")
- I accept forgiveness through faith and thank God for it.

Inhale:

- I once again entrust the control of my life to Christ, and I accept by faith that he now fills me with the Holy Spirit.

Again, it is very important:

We have not earned forgiveness or the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Christ has purchased them for us by his death on the cross, and that is why we can accept both gifts by faith alone (Ephesians 2:8).

5. Why it is useful to live constantly in the fullness of the Holy Spirit?

Read Ephesians 5:17-21 and respond to the previous question:

This is one of the most important lessons for a young believer. What would you like to remember in particular from the Step "To live in the power of the Holy Spirit"?