

S T U D Y G U I D E



JOEL R. BEEKE



ASSURANCE
of FAITH

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Assurance of Faith

Joel R. Beeke



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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Introduction

Many Christians have wrestled with the question, “How can I be certain that I am saved?” In *Assurance of Faith*, Dr. Joel R. Beeke examines the Bible and the Westminster Confession of Faith to help lead Christians to a place of infallible, unwavering assurance. This teaching series can be a great help to struggling Christians, a source of encouragement to those who are already assured, and a word of caution to those who are falsely assured.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind you of what you have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p>How to use: Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging with its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge each lecture is communicating.</p>

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that are intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p>How to use: Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The timestamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at Ligonier.org.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p>How to use: Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through the *Assurance of Faith* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 13-Week Plan	Standard 11-Week Plan	Abbreviated 6-Week Plan	Intensive 4-Week Plan
Week	Lesson			
1	*	1	1	1-2
2	1	2	2 & 3	3-5
3	2	3	4 & 5	6-8
4	3	4	6 & 7	9-11
5	4	5	8 & 9	
6	5	6	10 & 11	
7	6	7		
8	7	8		
9	8	9		
10	9	10		
11	10	11		
12	11			
13	*			

* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

1

Assurance Defined

INTRODUCTION

Many Christians—true followers of Jesus—are missing out on the robust fullness of their faith. This fullness, and all its accompanying fruit, comes from having full assurance of faith. In this lesson, Dr. Beeke defines *assurance* and explains why it is a crucial part of the Christian life.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Define *assurance* as it relates to the Christian faith
- Understand why assurance is important to have in the Christian life

KEY IDEAS

- Assurance is available to all Christians, though few truly possess full assurance.
- Assurance brings about the fullness of faith, as evidenced by its fruit: hope, joy, and love.
- Assurance is important for (1) a sound understanding of the spiritual life; (2) peace with God and joy in God; (3) Christian service; (4) communion with God; (5) holiness; (6) resilience against secularization; and (7) the promotion of biblical doctrine.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- Why are you undertaking this study on assurance?
- What is your own definition of the word *assurance*? Where have you heard it used? What role does it play in your faith?

Scripture Reading

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

—2 Timothy 4:6–8

- What does this passage reveal about Paul's faith? Are you included in this promise?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Definition of Assurance

0:00–9:58

- What is assurance of faith?
- What elements of faith are brought to fullness through assurance?
- What are the fruits of assurance?

Importance of Assurance

9:58–25:03

- What are the seven reasons why assurance of faith is important?
- Choose one of these seven reasons and explain how it illustrates the importance of assurance.

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- What are the benefits of having full assurance? What are some of the sacrifices required for it?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss their thoughts about why people lack assurance. Is it because the sacrifices required are too great? Is it because they don't know about the fullness available to them through it?

- In two columns, list the type of evidence that is appealed to by those with assurance characterized by easy-believism and the type of evidence that displays the genuine assurance of faith.

If you are in a group, have the members discuss evidence that currently describes their faith. Consider questions like this: In what areas have you grown the most since first trusting Christ? How does your faith embody the evidence of true assurance?

- “False assurance generally leads a person into one of two dead ends: the dead end of sentimental emotion or the dead end of dry intellectualism.” How would you describe the person who is characterized by sentimental emotion or dry intellectualism?

If you are in a group, have each member discuss the difference between “easy-believism” and “hard-believism.” How does the idea of “hard-believism” deprive Christians of true assurance of faith?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for His perfect, unchanging nature in which we place our assurance.
- Confess any lack of faith you might have in the promises of God that robs your sense of assurance.
- Thank God for His promises and plans for you that are “above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20).
- Ask God to increase your faith as you venture toward a life of true assurance.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Which of the following statements best defines assurance of faith?
 - a. A feeling that you can trust God in hard times
 - b. A robust belief in God's salvation that is evidenced in full fruits
 - c. Dependence on God each day, even though we don't know the future
 - d. The understanding that if we confess our sins, God will forgive us
2. Which word was used to describe the type of assurance experienced by most today?
 - a. Doctrinal
 - b. Regional
 - c. Maximal
 - d. Minimal
3. Which analogy best compares faith with assurance?
 - a. Faith is a seed, but assurance is a tree laden with fruit.
 - b. Faith is the wind, and assurance is the sail of a boat.
 - c. Faith is a flower, and assurance is its fragrance.
 - d. Faith is belief, but assurance is action.
4. What measuring stick does Dr. Beeke use to differentiate between true and false assurance?
 - a. The Nicene Creed
 - b. The Beatitudes
 - c. The evidence of works of faith
 - d. Our baptism
5. A person can have salvation and eternal life without having assurance of faith.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. Which of these was not an important reason for assurance of faith?
 - a. Christian service
 - b. Communion with God
 - c. Freedom from temptation
 - d. Peace with God

Answer Key—Assurance Defined

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- What does this passage reveal about Paul's faith? Are you included in this promise?

This passage reveals that Paul's faith is characterized by a vibrant assurance as he examines his present ("For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of departure is at hand"), his past ("I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"), and his future ("there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness"). This future promise is given only by the Lord, the righteous Judge. It is promised to you also if you love His appearing.

During the Video

Definition of Assurance

- What is assurance of faith?

It is a conviction that you as a Christian belong to Christ through faith and will enjoy everlasting salvation in Him. Having assurance means knowing that you are graciously chosen and loved by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Having assurance means you rejoice in that salvation and believe that all the glorious benefits of the covenant of grace are yours.

- What elements of faith are brought to fullness through assurance?

Assurance of faith brings the full assurance of hope. It brings the fullness of joy and love. It includes freedom from the guilt of sin, joy in your relationship with God, and a sense of belonging to the family of God.

- What are the fruits of assurance?

Assurance is known by its fruits of closeness with God, childlike trust, willing obedience, thirsting after God, unspeakable joy and peace in the triune God, and longing to glorify Him by carrying out the Great Commission. Assurance is evident in a robust and blessed life that is a strong witness for Christ.

Importance of Assurance

- What are the seven reasons why assurance of faith is important?
(1) Soundness of faith in life; (2) peace with God and joy in God; (3) Christian service; (4) communion with God; (5) holiness to the Lord; (6) countering secularization; and (7) the promotion of biblical doctrine.
- Choose one of these seven reasons and explain how it illustrates the importance of assurance.

Answers may vary. Example: Holiness to the Lord illustrates the importance of assurance. The more assurance you have, the more holiness will flow from your life. Similarly, holiness is critical for the maintenance of high levels of assurance in faith.

After the Video

- What are the benefits of having full assurance? What do you consider to be some of the sacrifices required for it?

Full assurance brings with it benefits for the past, present, and future. It removes guilt from sin, it leads to a robust, fruit-filled life, and it holds the promise of God's crown of righteousness. Ultimately, the sacrifice required for it was made by Jesus on the cross, but believers also have to follow Him to have true assurance by living godly lives of repentance and faith. This might mean letting go of certain habits, ending harmful relationships, or risking reputation in order to live fully in assurance of faith.

- In two columns, list the type of evidence that is appealed to by those with assurance characterized by easy-believism and the type of evidence that displays the genuine assurance of faith.

Easy-Believism Assurance

Responding to an altar call

Attending church

Serving in church ministries

Doing good deeds

Living a decent and moral life

Genuine Assurance

Inner confidence in God's promises

Thirst for righteousness

Full faith, hope, love, and joy

Fruit of obedience, trust, etc.

Living for Christ above all else

- “False assurance generally leads a person into one of two dead ends: the dead end of sentimental emotion or the dead end of dry intellectualism.” How would you describe the person who is characterized by sentimental emotion or dry intellectualism?

Answers to this question may vary. Dr. Beeke describes the person who is caught up in sentimental emotion as one who has merely had an emotional response to

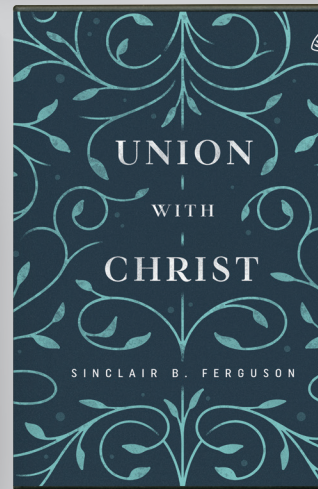
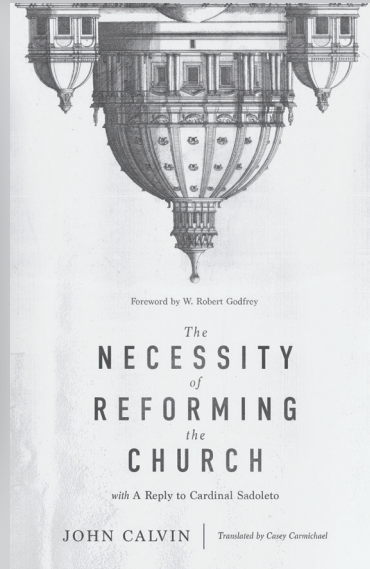
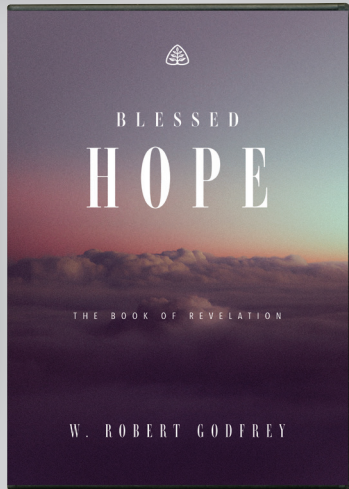
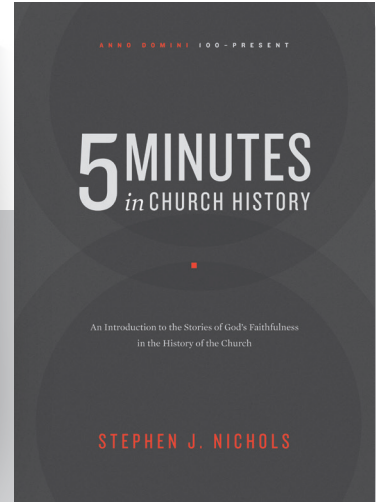
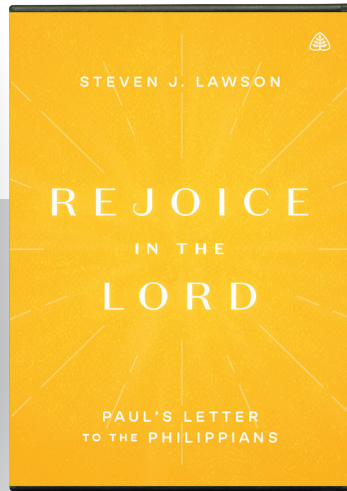
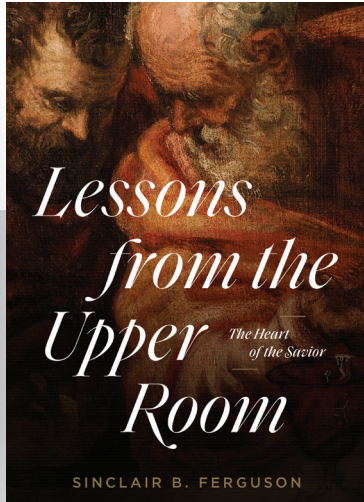
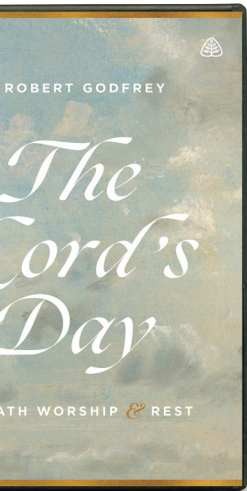
a hyped-up but watered-down presentation of the gospel and know little of true conviction of sin. Because of this, he claims forgiveness without repentance. The person who is characterized by dry intellectualism may know the doctrines of the faith but, likewise, has never experienced what it is to come before a holy God as an unrighteous sinner.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 1

- 1. B.**
While statements A, C, and D are certainly elements of assurance of faith, statement B is the best overall definition. True assurance includes but also transcends faith, trust, and forgiveness. It is the absolute belief in God's salvation and all the blessings and promises it entails, as evidenced by a fruit-filled life.
- 2. D.**
Dr. Beeke believes that we are living in an age of minimal assurance. He observes that full, robust assurance with all its fruits is uncommon today, partly because people don't realize they can even have assurance.
- 3. A.**
Dr. Beeke noted, "Faith . . . has the seed of assurance in it. But when we speak about assurance of faith, we're not talking about just a little seed of assurance; we're talking about the full flower. We're talking about glorious fruits of saving grace." He also quoted James W. Alexander's description of assurance as a tree laden with fruit. Both faith and assurance have an element of belief, but both must be lived out through action.
- 4. B.**
The Beatitudes reveal the nature of a person's heart. While someone can have many of the outward trappings of true faith (attending church, serving in church ministries, living a decent life, etc.), the evidence of true assurance comes from their inner person. The Beatitudes reference being spiritually poor, mourning over sin, submitting to God, and other evidence of those who treasure Jesus Christ above all else.
- 5. A.**
While a person lacking assurance will miss out on a full, robust life of knowing with full confidence that he belongs to God and also miss out on the fruit that comes as a result of such assurance, he may still be saved through faith in Jesus Christ.
- 6. C.**
Freedom from temptation is not guaranteed as the result of having true assurance. On the other hand, assurance with God will result in Christian service, communion with God, and a sense of peace with God.

We want to see men and women around the world connect
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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