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Time of Assembly



Sunday:	
Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Worship	10:00 a.m.
Worship	5:00 p.m.
	(every other week)
Wednesday:	
Bible Study	6:30 p. m.

Do You Feel Saved?

By Wayne Greeson

Are you saved? How do you know you are saved? "I know I am saved because I feel it in my heart," many often say. But are the feelings of your heart the proper standard to determine your salvation? We do not use this standard in other matters. No one says of his bank statement, "I know it is right because I feel it in my heart," while they ignore to properly add and subtract from their balance. No carpenter says, "I know the board is 10 feet long because I feel it in my heart" — he checks the board with the proper standard, the measuring tape! But, when it comes to a matter far more important than bank balances and board lengths — salvation — many are willing to trust their eternal welfare to their feelings.

Can you trust the feelings of your heart to tell you whether or not you are saved? The Bible says "No!"

- "*He who trusts in his own heart is a fool*" (Prov. 28:26),
- For "*the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps*" (Jeremiah 10:23).
- "*There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*" (Proverbs 14:12).

Feelings are subjective, they change from person to person and even within the same person. Truth is objective, it remains fixed and does not change, regardless of the person or the year.

The way you feel about salvation does not change God's truth concerning it, just as the way you feel about math, does not change the truth of it. Whether or not you are saved is an objective fact, not subject to the whims of how you feel from moment to moment. So how can they know they are saved? The Scripture says, "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding*" (Proverbs 3:5).

You do not have to rely upon your own faulty and deceptive feelings concerning your salvation. The Lord has given *“the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation”* (II Timothy 3:15). The knowledge and confidence of salvation can only come from the objective standard of God’s Word. God will judge you by His Word, not by how you feel. Jesus proclaimed, *“the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). What is your salvation based upon? Many people feel in their hearts they are saved because they have “simply believed” in Jesus. While salvation certainly requires faith in Jesus, faith alone does not and cannot save according to God’s Word. James wrote, *“You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only”* (James 2:24). Other people have prayed and “asked Jesus to come into their heart” and now they feel they are saved. But nowhere does the Bible teach one must simply pray to Jesus in order to be saved. God’s Word teaches to be saved you must: hear the gospel (Romans 10:17); believe Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 16:16); repent of your sins (Acts 2:38); confess Jesus (Romans 10:9; Acts 8:36-38) and be baptized for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). Those who obey God’s Word do not have to guess whether or not they are saved based upon the feelings of their heart. They know they are saved because their salvation is based on the unchanging Truth of God’s Word.

Teaching with Care

By Doy Moyer

“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (James 3:1).

For men and women who choose to teach in whatever capacity provided by the Lord, this passage can generate conflicting feelings. On the one hand, we know the Lord wants His people to teach. The gospel is to be preached (Romans 10:14-17). We are to teach our children, neighbors, and brothers and sisters. The word of God is to be passed on (cf. Deuteronomy 6:4-9). Saints are to be taught and trained to serve, truth is to be spoken in love, and we are to grow up so that we are not tossed about by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:11-16). Teaching is a major part of serving the Lord. This is how edification occurs and it glorifies God.

On the other hand, we have warnings telling us that teachers will be judged more strictly, and this can be a little frightening because we don’t want to lead anyone astray. We are told about the dangers of error and false teachers. Jesus warned His disciples, *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves”* (Matthew 7:15). Peter warned about those who *“secretly bring in destructive heresies”* (II Peter 2:1). While these false teachers are not of the same stock as those who make some mistakes (as we all do), the admonitions should spur us on to

self-evaluate and make sure that our teaching is sound with motives that are humble and pure. Too much is at stake to take on teaching with a careless attitude about what we say and how we say it.

Paul's concern about his own teaching is evident in many passages. For example, Paul asked the Colossian Christians to pray "*that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison — that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak*" (Colossians 4:3-4). The prayer in this case was not about opening the minds and hearts of hearers; it was about how the teachers went about their work. We need to pray for teachers to make what they teach clear, understandable, and appropriate with grace, seasoned with salt, "*so that you may know how you ought to answer each person*" (Colossians 4:6). This is godly wisdom.

"*That I may make it clear*" should resonate with all teachers. Clarity is vital. If we are vague, ambiguous, or equivocal in how we approach matters, we open many doors for misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Though there are times when ambiguity can be appropriate and purposeful, it can also serve error well if we are not careful. People sometimes take what we say in ways we did not intend, so we must then clarify what we mean. "That's not what I meant" can become tedious, but we can head off much of that by striving to be clear in the first place and anticipating potential problems. Due to the abundance of doctrines and differences today, we may need to preface some of what we say with, "I'm not saying that but rather this." Even so, some will persist in taking what we say in directions we did not mean (they did with Jesus). We continue in prayers that we may "*make it clear*" while recognizing that hearers also bear responsibility for how they listen and what they do with it. Yet we do not want to be misunderstood. If this is a problem for us, we ought not to be teaching, as James warns.

Even Paul had his moments when he had to clarify misunderstandings about his teaching. Some misunderstood what he taught about grace, for example, as the epistle to the Romans shows. Yet Paul did not fail to clarify: "*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*" (Romans 6:1-2). I've seen where teachers say something to the effect that if we teach grace like Paul, then people will misunderstand. But we should see that if we teach it like Paul, we will also clarify and not be satisfied with the misunderstandings. Teach what should be taught and clarify where clarity is needed. This is the teacher's life.

I realize there is a difference between the "official" teaching by servants chosen to teach specific groups or classes and the more "unofficial" style of teaching that occurs in the home or on the streets. "Not many of you should become teachers" sounds more official perhaps, but the warning should still cause us all to be very careful, check what we say or do, and seek to be clear with the message gifted to us by God and of which we are stewards. It's not our word to do with whatever suits us; this is God's

word to which we are called in faithfulness.

Of Moods and Motivation

By Jason Moore

There are days I don't feel like working. There are days when I'm around people that I don't want to be. I'd rather not smile. I'd rather be alone and not be bothered.

Moods are peculiar things. Like the weather, they're hard to predict. They are affected by so many variables -- health, work, appetite, family, friendships, traffic, temperature, or evening news. Depending upon the mixture of these different conditions and which one is allowed to dominate our thinking, we are found to be in a mood that is good or bad, gloomy or bubbly, somber or cheerful, happy or sad, angry or lethargic, or somewhere in between.

Unlike the weather, moods can be controlled. We are not at the mercy of the present climate in which we find ourselves in a new mood or succumb to our present one. Ultimately it's our choice.

Your feelings spring from your decisions. The Lord has so constructed the heart of man that the will is given the governance. The emotions certainly prod the will. They fuel your decisions but the will is in the driver's seat. The course of your feelings can be changed by turning your attention to other matters, steering clear of known hazards, or doggedly driving ahead through the inclemency even when you don't feel like it.

The fact that your feelings are guided by the will can be demonstrated.

First, experience. Who has not engaged in some endeavor when he didn't feel like it and found that his mood was changed? Perhaps it was a job, or ball game, or vacation, or an unpleasant dinner guest. Such a change of emotion certainly doesn't happen in cases where you boast of your bad mood throughout the enterprise. But when you dive into the project with forced enthusiasm, soon manufactured zeal turns into genuine ardor.

Some will argue that the experience of "falling in love" violates the premise that feelings follow choices. Does it? The fact is that from childhood we store up a mental list of personality traits by which we define "attractive." Some of those choices are conscious. Having a parent who's a drinker causes one person to adopt an intolerance toward a prospective mate with the same inclination. Other traits -- maybe eye color -- are less deliberate, even optional. One day we meet the personification of this mental list that we've been compiling, and we "fall in love." It may even be dubbed "love at first sight." That one whom we have only imagined is now a reality.

Secondly, the Bible affirms that feelings are the product of choices. When Jesus spoke of the superiority of heavenly stores to earthly treasures, He said, "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" (Matthew 6:21). A man's heart or affec-

tion lies with his treasure. He feels strongly about those concerns in which he has invested his time, energy, or resources. A woman's feelings about the condition of the home are justified on the basis of the energy she has expended in making it clean and comfortable for the family. A man's pride in ensuring the family's security through his employment is based on his personal investment in labor. It is no accident that the woman carries a baby for nine months. It would seem that the Lord planned such an investment on the part of womankind so that natural affection or "bonding" results. Feelings follow choices. Where the treasure is, there the heart is.

Now make this information practical. Folks excuse behavior on the basis of their moods. They do or don't because they're "in the mood" or "not in the mood." That kind of justification is even used to defend immorality or to dismiss duty.

Consider a few applications. Hungering for righteousness is an acquired appetite. You will feel about Bible study how you choose to feel. If you invest no time and energy in the exploration of the word of God, you will not be excited by the enterprise. You set the mood for your worship. Paul said, "*Let a man examine himself*" (I Corinthians 11: 28). If you make no preparation for the assembling of the saints, such will be a bore to you. Your feelings for your spouse will follow your choices. When you stop doing the little things that accompanied your courtship, is it a wonder that feelings wane? If we make no investment in a relationship, the relationship stops growing and becomes vulnerable to failure or intrusions from an outside party.

"*Set your affections on things above, and not on things of this earth*" (Colossians 3:2). That commandment implies the possibility of mood control, of regulating our spiritual climate. We must be managers of our affections and not let our affections manage us.

The Hands That Hang Down

By Terry Wane Benton

They were beaten down. Their possessions were plundered, and family and friends were speaking evil of them. They were Christians on the verge of quitting. But, Paul wanted to remind them of the superiority and greatness of Christ, so he penned Hebrews with word pictures that Christ is all that truly matters. If you drift away from Christ you truly lose the greatest treasure of all. So, look up! "*Strengthen the hands that hang down*" (Hebrews 12:12). In other words, quit feeling sorry for yourself, look at what you have in Christ, and get those hands busy helping others. You find encouragement in giving it to others. Get busy! An idle mind is the devil's workshop!

Hands hanging down suggests that you don't appreciate what you have in Christ and that you are not busy in His kingdom helping others! Get those hands up after you go to the throne of grace to find the help you need inside (Hebrews 4:16). Strengthen those hands if you find they are hanging down for too long!