

Westminster Larger Catechism #81

Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in the estate of grace, and that they shall be saved? Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.

Eph. 1:13 *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,*

Is. 50:10 *Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.*

Psa. 31:22 *I had said in my alarm, "I am cut off from your sight." But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help.*

1 John 3:9 *No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.*

Job 13:15 *Though he slay me, I will hope in him; yet I will argue my ways to his face.*

WLC 80 *Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation? Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.*

Discussion Questions

- I. What does the catechism mean by saying that assurance is not of the essence of faith?
- II. Do all Christians receive the grace of assurance as soon as they believe in Christ as their Savior?
- III. Can every Christian attain full assurance of his salvation?
- IV. After assurance of salvation is once attained, can it be lost?
- V. Can a true Christian's consciousness of God's presence and favor ever be wholly lost?
- VI. How should we seek to maintain a strong and clear assurance of our salvation?
- VII. Should we feel discouraged if we do not possess full assurance soon after we believe in Christ?