

if?

If? If what, you ask?

If you were to die today, are you 100% sure that you would go to heaven?

Regardless of whether you answer yes or no, Scripture instructs in 2 Corinthians that we should “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified?”

So, we need to test ourselves, but how do we do that?

1 John 3:4 tells us that “Everyone who sins breaks the law” (NIV). Romans 3:20 tells us that “through the law, we become conscious of our sin” (NIV).

For example, you may be driving down the highway, completely unaware that your 70mph speed is breaking the law (because the limit is 55mph). That is, until you see the sign. Then you are aware.

You may not be aware that you are trespassing on someone’s property illegally until you see the “no trespassing” sign. Again, that is when you become aware.

God's Law works the same way! The book of James tells us that it is like a mirror, revealing the truth about who we are and showing us where we have sinned.

It is by comparing ourselves to God's Law, the Ten Commandments, that we become aware of our sin – and it doesn't take long to see how sinful we are!

For example, the ninth commandment says, "You shall not give false testimony." In other words, you shall not lie. How many lies have you told in your life?

The eighth commandment says, "You shall not steal." Have you ever stolen anything? *Anything?* No matter how small?

The seventh commandment says, "You shall not commit adultery." Adultery is defined as the physical act of having sex with anyone outside of a marital relationship, but Jesus made it a heart issue when he said in Matthew 5:28, "But I say to you that whoever *looks* at a woman to lust for her has *already committed adultery* with her in his heart" (emphasis mine).

If you have done any of these things, then regardless of how you see yourself, the mirror of God's law reveals that you are a liar, a thief, and an adulterer at heart. James 2:10 tells us, "For whoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all."

If you were hanging from a cliff by a chain with ten links, only one of the links has to break before you would fall – and it's the same with God's law. We only have to break one before we are a sinner in God's sight.

Romans 6:23 reveals that the “wages of sin is death” ... in other words, the penalty for our sin is **death**. Since we will all die physically, this penalty of death means not only our physical death, but an even worse fate: eternal separation from God in hell.

Revelation 21:8 says, “But the...murderers, sexually immoral, ...idolaters, **and all liars** shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (emphasis mine).

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 says, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, **nor adulterers**, nor homosexuals...**nor thieves**...nor drunkards...will inherit the kingdom of God” (emphasis mine).

As you can see, that is bad news for all of us! As we said before, we have to test ourselves, and testing ourselves against the Ten Commandments is only the first part of the test.

If you broke civil law and were found guilty in court, the judge would give you a penalty for breaking the law.

Let's say that the penalty is much higher than what you can pay, so you will have to spend the rest of your life in a prison camp, doing hard labor. As you are being led away, someone you don't know stands up and tells the judge that not only does he have the means to pay your fine, but that he is willing to do so. All you have to do is trust in him that he will pay your penalty.

That scenario brings us to the second part of the test, which is: You stand convicted before God. What or whom are you trusting in to pay your penalty so that you can be set free?

Sadly, many people are trusting in the wrong thing.

Some are trusting in their good works, hoping that the good things that they have done will somehow balance out the fact that they have broken God's law. They hope that somehow God will consider them a "good person." However, just as that won't work in a civil court, it won't work in God's "court" either.

Others are trusting that since God is a good God, he will just forgive them – but once again, as in a civil court, if the judge is truly good, he can't just forgive you without the penalty being paid.

What then, is the correct answer? What is the one and only thing that we must trust in to be made right with God?

First, we must realize that God loves us to the point that “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

To pay the penalty that you and I owe, God became man in the form of Jesus. Jesus was fully God, yet fully man. He lived a perfect life, never sinning once. He didn't deserve the penalty of death, but he was crucified so that our debt of death is paid and we can be forgiven and live eternally with Him.

The great news is that death could not conquer His power! On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, defeating hell and death forever.

When we finally recognize that we owe a debt to our Creator, we will recognize that we cannot pay it. The mirror of the Law reveals that we have fallen short of God's standard of perfection. We see that our sin separates us from Holy God and that we need a Savior. The only correct response is that you and I must repent of our sins. It means we must change our minds about who God is. We must see the difference between right and wrong and we must turn away from sin.

This does not mean that we will never sin again, but our desire will be to live for God and we will want to do the things that please Him. We also have to put our trust in Jesus, believing that He paid the penalty for our sin.

Once we have done this, we are given a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26) and we become children of God (John 1:12; Romans 8:12).

In conclusion, let's look back to the question we started with – “if?”

If you were to die today, are you 100% sure that you would go to heaven?

If you have repented of your sins and trusted in Jesus, then you can be 100% sure that you will go to heaven when you die!!

We would love to have you join us in church, but if not us, find a church that believes the entire Bible and teaches it!!