

Briefing Document: 1 John Lesson 66-Why We Lack Assurance

Wednesday-June 17, 2026

Executive Summary

This document synthesizes the teachings from 1 John Lesson 66, focusing on why believers often struggle with the assurance of their salvation. The primary takeaway is that biblical assurance is not an emotional feeling but a rational reality based on the finished work of Jesus Christ. The teaching emphasizes the doctrine of justification—God’s legal declaration that a sinner is "not guilty" because Christ paid their debt in full. By shifting focus from subjective emotions or past experiences to the objective facts of Scripture, believers can find lasting peace. The document also covers the necessity of changing one's thinking to change behavior and provides an overview of the community's recent prayer requests and praises.

Community Prayer Requests and Praises

The community identified several individuals in need of prayer and shared significant answers to prayer:

- **Healing and Health Requests:**
 - **Emilyn:** A pregnant woman in Tucson experiencing breathing difficulties and lung problems following a previous bout with pneumonia.
 - **Valinda’s Neighbor:** A resident in "number five" recently diagnosed with cancer.
 - **Karen’s Neighbor:** An individual who recently returned home with a stent in his largest artery after his liver ceased functioning.
 - **From Janie:** Mark, a recently retired Chick-fil-A owner who has been unwell since surgery; he was successfully fast-tracked into the Mayo Clinic for evaluation.

- **Praises:**
 - **Barbara:** Reported being completely clear of cancer following an oncology appointment.
 - **JP:** An 11-year-old grandson who demonstrated generosity by choosing to pay for his family’s dinner using his own money.

Five Reasons Believers Lack Assurance

The teaching outlines five specific reasons why Christians may struggle to feel secure in their salvation.

1. Reaction to High Standards

Believers may lose assurance when they sit under strong preaching regarding God's high and holy standards. When a Christian recognizes their own sin or disobedience in light of these standards, it can lead to a crisis of confidence regarding their standing with God.

2. Inability to Accept Forgiveness

Many are dominated by their emotions and feel they are "too bad" to be saved. While the conscience is designed to convict a person of sin, it can sometimes overwhelm a believer. It is noted that while the law and conscience may condemn a person, the work of Christ graciously redeems them.

3. Lack of Understanding Regarding the Gospel

A primary cause of doubt is bad theology or a failure to comprehend the "plan of salvation."

- **The Error of Repeated Baptism:** Some people get baptized repeatedly because they lack assurance and are trying to "reinforce" their salvation through a physical act rather than through faith.
- **The Doctrine of Justification:** This is the legal act where God declares a guilty sinner to be "not guilty." To have assurance, one must believe that Christ actually took their sins away.
- **Emotion vs. Doctrine:** Emotion is described as "no safe storehouse for your assurance." Salvation must be built on a true understanding of the work of Christ, not a "crisis moment" or a prayer said during an emotional experience.

4. Uncertainty of the Exact Time of Salvation

Some doubt their salvation because they cannot point to the exact minute or hour they were "born again." However, salvation is described as an "invisible miracle" of regeneration. Just as a person knows they are alive without remembering their physical birth, a believer can know they are saved by the "fruits of the Spirit" and their current pursuit of God.

5. The Presence of the Flesh

Believers often feel the "pull of sin" and wonder if they have truly been transformed. The teaching explains that the very fact that sin bothers a person is evidence of a new nature. A non-believer is happy in their sin, whereas a transformed person desires deliverance from it. This internal conflict is a common experience, as described by the Apostle Paul in the book of Romans.

The Work of Christ and the Divine Account

The briefing emphasizes that God views the believer through the lens of Christ's perfection.

- **Paid in Full:** In the "accounting terms" of heaven, the debt of sin for a believer is marked as "paid in full" in the blood of Jesus.

- **Divine Forgetfulness:** The Bible states that God will never remember the sins of a believer. *“For as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”*
- **Substitutionary Atonement:** Christ was the perfect substitute. *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).* This "healing" refers to spiritual salvation, not physical miracles.

Methodology: Changing the Mind

To grow in holiness and assurance, a believer must focus on doctrine rather than just behavior.

- **Thinking vs. Acting:** It is impossible to change behavior permanently without first changing how a person thinks.
- **Developing the Mind of Christ:** Practicality in Christianity comes from crystallizing divine principles and weaving them into one’s thinking. For example, humility is learned by studying the character of the Son of God, not just by trying to "act" humble.
- **The Role of Knowledge:** High-quality Bible study involves examining the original text (Greek), understanding the "syntax" (how words relate), and determining the "lexicography" (the study of words) to find the mind of God.

Concluding Perspectives on Security

The document concludes with the "rational reality" of security found in *Romans 8:38–39*:

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This persuasion is not based on an emotional experience but on the historical and scriptural fact that Christ has defeated sin and is currently in heaven as our representative.

Reference Guide for Technical and Linguistic Terms

Term	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
Justification ¹	jus-tuh-fi-KAY-shun	A legal act where God declares a sinner to be righteous or "not guilty" based on the work of Christ.
Lexicography ²	lek-suh-KOG-ruh-fee	The study of the meaning, history, and use of words, often used to analyze biblical texts.

Sanctification ³	sangk-tuh-fi-KAY-shun	The ongoing process of being made holy or being set apart for God's service.
Syntax ⁴	SIN-taks	The way words are put together to form phrases or sentences; the relationship between words in a text.
Regeneration ⁵	re-jen-uh-RAY-shun	The spiritual rebirth or "invisible miracle" of being made a new creature in Christ.

¹ See section: *The Doctrine of Justification* ² See section: *Methodology: Changing the Mind* ³ See section: *Concluding Perspectives on Security* ⁴ See section: *Methodology: Changing the Mind* ⁵ See section: *Uncertainty of the Exact Time of Salvation*