

BE SURE of Your Eternal Destination

Why aren't ALL people sure they will go to heaven when they die?

A recent ABC poll stated that 89% of American's believe in heaven. Of these, three quarters doubted that they would ever get there physically. Let's quantify this. If the population of the USA is approximately 300 million, then 267 million (89%) people believe in heaven and 200 million (75% of those believing in heaven) doubt that they will ever get there physically. Let me repeat that. 200 million Americans (66%) are not sure that they will ever get to heaven! This doesn't even include the rest of the world.

Are you one of them?

Are you 100% sure that you will be going to heaven when you die? If you had to stand before the judgment seat of God at this very moment, would you be a bit nervous about your eternal destination?

This is probably the most important question that anyone can ask.

Why?

Because both *where* and *how* you will spend eternity is at stake. Nobody wants to get it wrong. Nobody wants to be left behind. Eternity is a long time.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know (for sure) that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13)

According to Scripture, there are only two destinations in the afterlife, heaven or hell.

How do you know *for sure* that heaven is your eternal destination? How do you know, without a doubt, that your eternal destiny will be a glorious one in heaven as opposed to a tortuous one in hell?

Many people don't know for sure. Most people assume that being a good person will automatically get them a key that unlocks the pearly gates. Most people assume that if they tip the scale of "good works versus bad works" above 50%, then a "loving" God would most assuredly let them spend eternity in heaven. Most people assume that by going to church every Sunday, they will go to heaven. We all know what happens when you assume.

You'll have hell to pay if you are wrong, so be SURE!

Without the complete assurance that you will go to heaven when you die, it is impossible to live a victorious Christian life. This is because that pebble of pessimism will create a boulder of burden around all of your necks. With this heavy load, you cannot run the race and finish the job of the "Great Commission."

Every year, professional athletes attend training camp to get back to the basics of their particular sport. Regardless of their previous successes, they review the fundamentals (hitting, throwing, base-running, blocking, tackling, special teams, etc.) of their profession to ensure that they have a solid foundation in which to excel. Most games are lost because of a lapse in a basic skill. These are professional athletes who are supposed to be the best at their profession, yet they go back to the basics each and every year. They hone their skills to ensure that they are foundationally sound.

This is what God is asking each of you to do as well; get back to the basics of the Christian faith to be sure that you are Biblically sound. God does not want your failure to understand His basic plan of salvation to keep you from winning the game of life.

You can be SURE of your Eternal destination. You can also remember critical Biblical truths that will enable you to live a more abundant Christian life and be a more effective witness to your family and friends.

I can help you remember these Biblical truths by using an acrostic. An acrostic is a word that is formed as a result of combining several first letters of words together. Each of the first letters stands for something unique.

I do this with the word SURE. Since it's critical that each of you know *for sure* that you are going to heaven, there is no better word for you to remember.

Sin...Understand...Repent...Enhance

You will be able to use the word S.U.R.E. to make it simple and easy to help witness to those that are not sure of their salvation. It's easy and it's Biblical.

SIN

Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. (Romans 3:23)

The first letter in the acronym S.U.R.E is "S" for Sin.

No one likes to admit it, but everyone does it. Everyone sins.

The first way to know for sure that you will be spending eternity in heaven is to sin. This may sound ironic since the normal thought process would assume that sin assures anything but a ticket to heaven. But it's true. You see, without sin, you cannot accept God's free gift of grace and be saved.

It should be easy for you to admit that you are a sinner, but it's not. Alcoholics who don't believe they have a problem typically won't seek help and will usually continue in their self-destructive behavior. Once they finally admit to themselves that they have a disease, can they begin the healing process. Like an alcoholic, you too must admit you have a disease called sin. The sin addict cannot be cured until he admits to the disease and takes the steps necessary for the cure.

The first way to know for sure that you are going to heaven is to be honest with yourself and acknowledge the fact that you are a sinner.

Understand the Consequences to Sin, both Temporal & Eternal

"For the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

The second letter in the acronym S.U.R.E is "U" for Understand.

The next way to know for sure that you will be spending eternity in heaven is to understand that there *are* consequences to your sin.

Mankind fully understands that their actions have consequences. But, more often than not, they take the risk of getting caught and enduring the penalty that befalls them. To many people, the short-term gain (of pleasure or profit) outweighs the long-term pain. This false assurance is often man's downfall. Remember in the Garden of Eden, the devil gave Eve that same false assurance when he told her that "you will not surely die" if she ate the forbidden fruit.

The consequence of rejecting God's plan of salvation and dying in your sins is eternal separation from God in hell. This is an eternal consequence that happens once and cannot be changed or altered. Hell is a real place and was created for Satan and his followers.

"Then he will say to those on His left, away from me, you that are under God's curse! Away to the eternal fire (Hell) which has been prepared for the Devil and his angels!" (Matthew 25: 41)

Like he did to Eve in the garden, Satan wants all of mankind to have a false sense of assurance about heaven. He wants you to believe that hell doesn't exist, and that heaven is the only destination in the afterlife. He wants you to believe that going to hell will be a big party, with all your friends in attendance. He wants you to believe that there will be no torment in hell. Satan wants you to believe that being apart from God for eternity will fun and games. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Repent of your Sins and Accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior

"If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved." (Romans 10: 9)

The third letter in the acronym S.U.R.E is "R" for Repent.

In order to be sure of spending eternity in heaven you must repent of your sins and accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. 100% Perfection is God's benchmark. Even one sin will condemn you.

Since God is holy, *all* sin must be punished. The penalty for any sin is separation from God in hell.

If man acknowledges the fact that he is a sinner and recognizes that there are consequences to his sin, why doesn't he change his behavior, instead of suffering the consequences. It's because of his PRIDE!

Pride was the first sin and is the root of all subsequent sin. Pride is self-centered. Pride believes that you have everything in your life under control because of *your* uniqueness, *your* power, *your* authority, and *your* competence. Having pride means that you don't need anyone or anything to help you manage your life.

Pride has no use for God and God has no use for pride.

Remember, Satan owns the world system. Your human nature, controlled by this system, will always lead you away from God and His plan for salvation. Its goal is to blind you to the truth. Anyone who obeys their human nature cannot please God.

“Those who obey their human nature cannot please God.” (Romans 8:8)

A change of heart, from one of pride to one of humility, is what leads you to salvation. This “godly sorrow” is the first sign of repentance. Repentance is turning *away* from self and *toward* God.

God Himself ordained the process of repentance to Solomon in the Old Testament.

“If my people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear them from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)

By repenting of your sins and accepting Jesus as your personal Savior, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. It's your choice. Each of you has to make that personal decision either to reject or accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior or follow Satan and the world system.

Enhance the Kingdom

“They must repent of their sins and turn to God and do the things that show that they have repented.” (Acts: 26: 20)

The fourth letter in the acronym S.U.R.E is “E” for Enhance.

In order to be sure of spending eternity in heaven you must do your part to enhance the kingdom.

One of the sure ways of identifying a new (or true) Christian is in their willingness to enhance the kingdom. Enhance means to grow with assistance from another. It infers that each Christian should have a part in growing the body of Christ. Jesus commanded to all of his followers just before he ascended into heaven to be a “witness to all mankind.” It's the great commission.

“And this Good News about the Kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all mankind; and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14)

Once you are saved, your love for Jesus (and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit) will enable you to want to witness for Him. You will be a different person, transformed from within. Out of obedience, your goal will be to share your faith with as many people as possible. Out of love, you will want everyone to know the truth about the free gift of salvation

Your faith gets you into heaven. Your efforts help others get there!

In summary, I hope I presented a unique perspective to God's Word that will allow you to be *sure* about your salvation.

By using the acrostic S.U.R.E, you can easily remember the biblical truths that allow you to be SURE of your salvation.

S- Sin. We are all sinners. Until you recognize this fact, you cannot begin the transformation that leads you to your redemption.

U- Understand that sin has both temporal and eternal consequences. The temporal consequences could result in sickness, incarceration, or even death. The eternal consequences of sin could dictate an eternity apart from God and filled with unceasing torment.

R- Repent of your sins and accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. It's only a humble spirit that rids itself of pride that gets reconciled. Confess with your mouth and believe in your heart in Jesus and you will be saved.

E- Enhance the Kingdom. Once you establish a personal relationship with Jesus, your primary goal will be to fulfill the “Great Commission” by bringing others to Christ.

BE SURE!