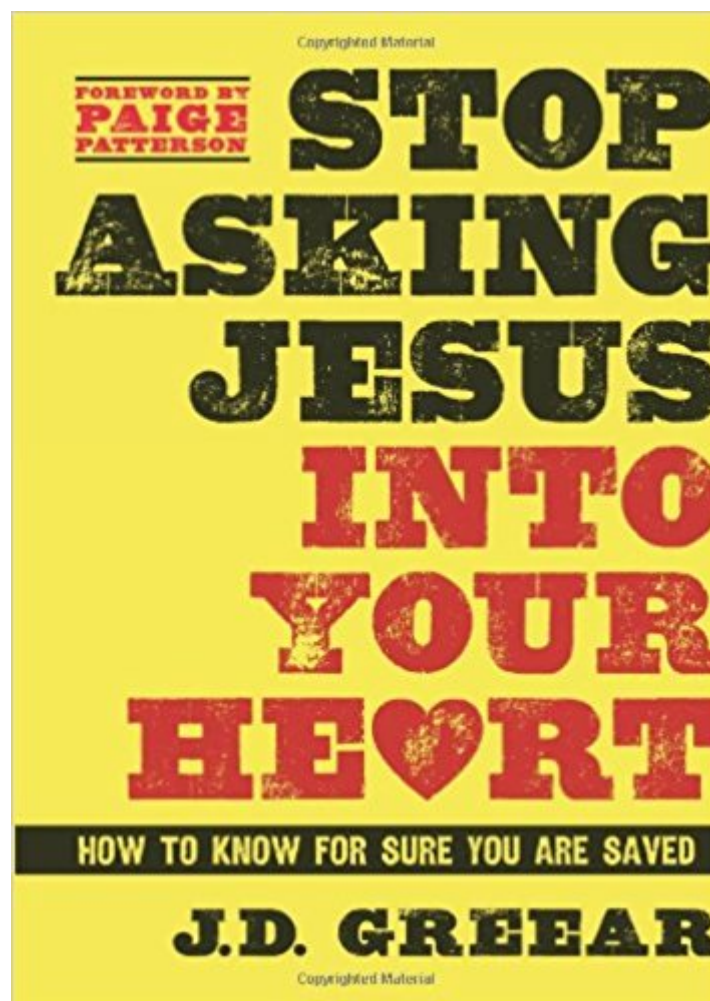




The book was found

Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart: How To Know For Sure You Are Saved



Synopsis

“If there were a Guinness Book of World Records entry for the amount of times having prayed the sinner’s prayer, I’m pretty sure I’d be a top contender,” says pastor and author J. D. Greear. He struggled for many years to gain an assurance of salvation and eventually learned he was not alone. “Lack of assurance” is epidemic among evangelical Christians. In *Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart*, J. D. shows that faulty ways of presenting the gospel are a leading source of the confusion. Our presentations may not be heretical, but they are sometimes misleading. The idea of “asking Jesus into your heart” or “giving your life to Jesus” often gives false assurance to those who are not saved and keeps those who genuinely are saved from fully embracing that reality. Greear unpacks the doctrine of assurance, showing that salvation is a posture we take to the promise of God in Christ, a posture that begins at a certain point and is maintained for the rest of our lives. He also answers the tough questions about assurance: What exactly is faith? What is repentance? Why are there so many warnings that seem to imply we can lose our salvation? Such issues are handled with respect to the theological rigors they require, but Greear never loses his pastoral sensitivity or a communication technique that makes this message teachable to a wide audience from teens to adults.

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Customer Reviews

“Warmly personal. Immensely helpful. Wonderfully practical. Thoroughly biblical. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to every Christian who longs to know, experience, and spread assurance of salvation in Christ.” — David Platt, Senior Pastor, The Church at Brook

HillsBirmingham, AL "Salvation is a serious issue. A Scripture commands us, on the one hand, to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling" and, on the other, paints beautiful pictures of believers walking in great assurance. J.D. helps us see what conversion really is and what it is not. This book will be a help for those who wrestle with their position before God and a wake-up call for those with false confidence. I recommend it highly." Matt Chandler Lead Pastor, The Village Church President, Acts 29 Church Planting Network "Outstanding! This is a truly useful book. It's readable, engaging and packed with scriptural insight. It not only gives hope to Christians struggling with assurance of salvation, it will equip any Christian to better share the gospel and guide others toward genuine repentance and faith in Jesus." Joshua Harris Senior Pastor, Covenant Life Church "Every Christian struggles with doubt about salvation. The comforting passages of Scripture, assuring believers of their hope in salvation, were written to build up faith in the face of doubt. Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart guides readers through both assurance and perseverance in a life-altering way. Greear's work is both an affront to easy-believism and a spotlight on the promises of God's Word. A comforting wakeup call." Ed Stetzer President of Lifeway Research "So much emphasis today is on the power of personal persuasion in sharing the gospel. What to say, how to say it. Reasons to believe, proofs for the authority of scripture, methods for gaining credibility blah blah blah. Pick up a copy of my friend, J.D. Greear's book and learn the marks of a person saved by Jesus Christ. I commend it to you." Dr. James MacDonald Senior Pastor of Harvest Bible Chapel and author of VerticalChurchJamesmacdonald.com "A sensitive conscience can be a curse from Satan or a blessing from God. Does your conscience drive you from God, or to Him? In this book, J. D. Greear gets the Gospel right. And the Gospel is the way from conviction to salvation. This book should help you know how to place your conscience in the Lord's hands, where it can be a tool greatly used by God, as it was in Augustine's life, or Martin Luther's." Mark Dever Pastor and author of 9 Marks of the Healthy Church J.D. tackles an incredibly vital topic in our time, but from the front lines of ministry as one who stands unashamed to call people to follow Christ. Read this book and understand with fresh eyes and a hungry heart the wonder of biblical conversion. Alvin Reid, Ph.D. Professor of Evangelism & Student Ministry/Bailey Smith Chair of Evangelism Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary "I wore out 2 Sharpies worth of ink writing Amen & WOW in the margins of this new book. Chapter after chapter I was encouraged, rebuked, disciplined, and compelled to be a better minister of the Gospel. Thank you J.D. for this gift to the church." David Nasser Pastor/Author/Evangelist "I have to admit the title of this book made me uncomfortable. It sounded to me like a tract against the so-called

a sinner's prayer, and I find it biblical to cry out "Lord have mercy on me, a sinner!" But as I read this book I found that is not what it is about at all. In this volume, J. D. Greear, one of the most dynamic and brilliant pastors in evangelical life today, addresses a common problem among Christians: the sense that we can never get assured enough that Jesus hears our sinners prayer and receives us, just as we are. This book throws the spotlight on Jesus as a welcoming, merciful Savior who joyously receives all who come to him. This book could help free you, or someone you love, from the nagging fear that Jesus is trying to keep you out of his kingdom.

• Russell D. Moore Dean, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Author, *Tempted and Tried: Temptation and Triumph of Christ* When I first read the title, I was caught off guard "because I am an evangelist who continually urges hearers to repent and ask Jesus into their heart. Once I began to read, however, I began to understand the big idea "praying a prayer of repentance and salvation ought only to mark the beginning of a lifetime of repentance and faith. J.D. wrestles with a tough subject here and does a tremendous job of helping the church come to grips with a salvation not anchored in a one-time prayer but the finished work of Christ. Clayton King Teaching Pastor, NewSpring Church Campus Pastor, Liberty University This book is similar to John Stott's *Basic Christianity* in that it lays out with clarity and reasoned arguments the path to Christian belief. *Stop Asking Jesus into Your Heart* is especially helpful in answering many follow-on questions, too. Faith seekers and faith sharers alike will benefit from J. D. Greear's clear thinking on what effectuates and evidences true salvation in Christ.

• David A. Spence An Executor of Dr. Stott's Literary Estate "Improper methodology and sloppy theology have paralyzed at worst and confused at best many of our churches today when it comes to evangelism. J.D.'s book is not only timely but crucial. Mike Calhoun Executive Assistant to the President Word of Life Fellowship Inc Author of *Where Was God When: Real Answers to Hard Questions* "This is a very helpful and needed book. Untold numbers of people are thinking of themselves as true Christians when really theirs is a false assurance; while others are true Christians but lack a solid assurance. The book spells out how to teach the Gospel in such a way as to help avoid these tragic results and how to help deliver those who are experiencing them. The emphasis on clear presentation of the meaning and evidence of repentance and faith is exactly what is needed. Also the difference a genuine assurance of salvation can make in one's life is brought out. I highly recommend this book!

• Frank Barker Pastor Emeritus Briarwood Presbyterian Church Birmingham, AL "Don't let the provocative first half of the title scare you away from reading this important book! Emanating from his own personal and pastoral experience, yet with feet firmly planted in the sufficiency of Scripture, Greear is far more interested in helping us have

genuine biblical assurance of salvation than anything else. He rightly reminds us we must emphasize the absolute indispensability of repentance and faith as necessary for salvation. Though I might quibble over a few things I would express differently, the vast majority of J. D.'s book I wholeheartedly endorse. Timely, engagingly written, and thoroughly practical, it deserves a place on every pastor's shelf. Buy it! Apply it!

• David L. Allen, Ph.D. Dean, School of Theology
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

"This is a book I wish was available when I turned 20 and had a terrible season of doubting my salvation. By God's grace and the truth of the gospel I was able to settle the issue. I have lived in the full assurance of my salvation in Jesus ever since. God wants us to experience the joyful truth that we are eternally secure in Jesus. This book can help take you there. I will be recommending this book often!"

• Daniel L. Akin
President, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

"As someone who works with young people, I often see the pitfall that my friend J.D. Greear explores in *Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart; How To Know for Sure You are Saved*. I have sat with many 18-24 year olds that say they had no clue what they were doing when they repeated a prayer with someone as a young person. As next generation leaders, we have to focus on true life-change, really direction change rather than just a spiritual transaction. I am thankful that J.D. was willing to take on the hard discussions related to salvation and discipleship in this new book."

• J. Roger Davis, President, Student Life

"*Stop Asking Jesus into your heart*" by J.D. Greear is a biblical clarification for the assurance of salvation to the Christian based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. The invitation to eternal life is more than a prayer! It is a living, breathing, real, relevant, relationship with God through Jesus Christ while being sealed by the Holy Spirit. The Gospel saves and Sustains! Read, Reflect and Rejoice in the ability to know of the assurance of your salvation!"

• Ed Newton
Bible Communicator
Memphis, TN

J. D. Greear is lead pastor of The Summit Church, a multi-site congregation in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. He holds an M.Div. in International Church Planting and a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Greear also lived and worked among Muslims in Southeast Asia for two years and wrote *Breaking the Islam Code*. He and his wife have four children.

The author places an important focus on the potential fallacies of ceremonial salvation. Cliches and phrases do not save but faith and repentance do. I personally disagree with his exegesis of Hebrews chapter 6 which he spends a great deal of time on. I believe the passage says what it

clearly says and means what it clearly means. It is possible that the individuals to whom the writer is referring were never saved to begin with, but the Greek language describes a person who has truly put their faith in Jesus Christ and has become part of his body the Church. This in no way takes away from the teaching of eternal security for every true believer. It simply opens the door for the possibility that in some circumstances it is possible for True Believers to apostatize, and by an act of their own will walk away from their faith. A chilling prospect!

At the center of the Christian life are Jesus and his saving work, through which believers everywhere can enter into the gift of eternal life. Jesus' sacrifice was enough to atone for all peoples sin, this we know to be true. Less certain to some, including me, however, is the matter of assurance in that salvation. This is the subject that J.D. Greear attempts to make clearer to his readers in his book, "Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart". Now, while that title may seem a bit intense or out of the ordinary, which I certainly do not argue against, it does indeed put to rest the issue of those struggling with salvation assurance in a way that can hopefully lead its readers to finally stop praying the sinners prayer, to stop bearing the weight of salvation on his/her shoulders, and to place hope in the true thing that can surely bring salvation: Jesus and His saving work on the cross, through God and His saving grace. In my evaluation of the authors concept, I want to make extremely clear that while this book may not have been written in the "deepest" way it could have been, it has been written in a very clear and easily understandable manner that (hopefully) any Christian, at any point in their life, can read, understand, and take it's message to heart. At the basis of the message that J.D. attempts to get across the idea that believers can indeed have assurance of salvation, and this is defended by three principles that he brings up and evaluates, and these are: "A present posture of faith and repentance; perseverance in the faith; and evidences of eternal life in our heart" a love for God and a love for others, particularly other believers. These three combine to give us a powerful sense of assurance that we belong to God. These principles are laid out and explained beautifully throughout the book. J.D. goes about unpacking what he means by a posture of faith in the early chapters of the book. He explains that faith and repentance are inseparable, not because they are very similar, but because they are two sides of the same coin: They belong together. Simple. Where true faith is, repentance will also be. He explains that repentance is the action part of faith; it is the active change of posture from a life bent on serving self, to a life in service of God. Repentance understood this way must mean a 100% change. That is, there is no part of one's life that remains apart from seeking God. It is a full surrendering to Creator. Secondly,

J.D. explains what we should expect to see in those who are truly saved is perseverance in the faith. What he means is that when one has a true faith, and when one is truly saved, their actions will show this in the way they act through trials. Note that they will be facing trials, as evidenced in scripture, and that the trials may make the believer doubt, but it is the perseverance that is the marker of salvation. As Jesus explains in Matthew 10:22, "He who endures to the end will be saved." Finally, as J.D. dives into the matter of eternal life in one's heart, he reveals that the two markers of this are a love for God and others. Not surprisingly, this matches up with what we find to be said in scripture over and over again, in both the Old and New Testament. As I reflect on what I read, I am so grateful to have been pointed towards this book. The title stood out and confused me, and I am thankful to J.D. for having strategically worded his title in this eye-catching way. I find myself closely identifying with many of the doubts that J.D. himself went through in his early years. The problem for me was that, while I had doubted similarly, I had never really sought out the answers to the doubts. Fortunately for me, the book was very easy to read and understand and was a rather quick read. I agree very much with the points he brings up. I believe that salvation is not by works, and that that does not relieve us of any action on our part, which J.D. emphasizes well: we have the responsibility to pray for others, to love others, to love God, to seek God, and to place our hopes and faith in Him and Jesus' work on the cross. This list may seem long, but there is so much peace and joy to be found in doing these things. While, at the same time, we need to be careful to not have a "fake" repentance, which in reality is no repentance at all. I have been guilty of this at points in my life, and I was ashamed and embarrassed to read the description J.D. so accurately lays out. The book was very enjoyable, and I did not seem to find any points where I disagreed with J.D., and this I attribute to the fact that his points seem to be very scripturally based and backed up. I appreciate his reliance on scripture and church teaching, and I know that I will be recommending this book to friends and family in the near future. I want to end this part of the review with the idea that J.D. brings up about not being too easily swayed by feelings, belief is the important thing, not feelings. I have already discussed some of the impact this book has had on my personal spiritual life, but I will expand here. It would be a blatant lie to say that this book was just another book I read for class that I will soon forget about. This book will stay close on my bookshelf (metaphorically speaking, as I bought the digital version of the book) and will be referenced often, especially when I am approached with friends or family who are struggling with the issue of assurance of salvation. Honestly, I did not know that I was struggling with this until I read the book. It has been a subtle struggle I guess, something that I tended to avoid speaking or thinking about. One way that I will begin to implement the concepts talked about in this

book pertains directly to how I think about salvation. That is, I want to impress in my head the picture of placing my hand upon Christ's head, with the full belief that His work is what saves me. This is the most important step for me, specifically because I am the type of person who tends to have a "debate" with God. I tell God that I will serve him in x way, and that I expect y in return (most of the time this exchange is done without me actually speaking to God, as if I can keep it a secret from him or something). I recognize how foolish this is and how immature I have been. I have been self-serving and selfish. As I write this review I can confidently say that I am changed, and not by my own efforts, but because I believe that God has enabled me to change and to have a different posture towards how I approach him. To use J.D. Greear's wording, I will place Him on the throne, and self on the cross.

Growing up in the church and in a pastor's home, I experienced much of what the author described including years of doubts about my salvation. I too have been baptized multiple times. I had wrestled with these issues in the ministry myself for years and had to face myself eventually and ask, "Who was I most concerned about?" Once I got over the numbers game and needing numerical evaluation for my ministerial efforts, it was clear that it was good theater to get people to doubt their salvation. (Greear also adds that Satan would want to assure some who shouldn't be assured.) Reading through the Gospel of John once, I noticed how many different times Jesus' closest followers "believed in" Him. I came to the same conclusions as the author that we reach new high points in understanding that make our previous faith look almost non-existent. This is called growth. A nine year old cannot view Jesus as a 39 year old but he or she can place the faith they have in Jesus and begin their journey. Since I had already wrestled with these things, Greear's book was a welcome confirmation and has become a great tool. I now have something I can put in the hands of doubters as well as influencers. I bought a stack to give away. I highly recommend this concise, biblical, and balanced treatment of a very prevalent problem. Greear has become an author whose books I search out.

This is the first book I've read by J.D. Greear. I wouldn't normally believe such a basic book was essential to be written then I became a pastor. I've seen first hand the disconnect between continuing faith, love of God and obedience. Often I hear the mentality of "I walked an aisle 40 years ago so I'm good." What an eye opening book for our current generation! It was sorely needed. Greear leads the reader well to consider why merely inviting Jesus into one's heart is not enough. And he does us the service of exploring different avenues of thought/common errors of thinking.

Overall, I am happy that I read it. My only gripe is in the way it was written. The structure of the book felt loose and his arguments felt circular from page to page. I wasn't always sure what direction he was going. And I'm not sure he did either. Still, a welcome addition and easily recommended.

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