



Part I: Lesson 2

Becoming Good Soil: Confidence

Fertile Soil: Starting Your New Life with Jesus



In our first lesson, we saw how Jesus compared spiritual growth to a seed planted in good soil. As a plant grows in good soil, it sinks its roots deeper and deeper into the ground. Daily, the plant becomes stronger as it draws out good nutrients from the soil. As you grow in your relationship with Jesus, you are growing stronger as you draw from His goodness and power.

YOUR GROWTH GOAL

In this lesson, you will learn **SEVEN PRINCIPLES** for being **CONFIDENT** about your new relationship with God:

- 1) **Confidence in God's love**
- 2) **Confidence in your salvation**
- 3) **Confidence that your sins are forgiven**
- 4) **Confidence that you are God's child**
- 5) **Confidence that God will never leave you**
- 6) **Confidence in your new life**
- 7) **Confidence in eternal life.**

Scripture tells us, "*Being **confident** of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 1:6).

Confidence means that you have a firm belief and reliance, a freedom from crippling doubt, and an inner assurance. To grow as a follower of Jesus, it is imperative that you develop an **inner confidence** in the salvation that Christ has given to you.



Before you go any further, stop and ask God to help you understand His Word, to help you experience His presence, and to become the person He wants you to be.

A PICTURE OF CONFIDENCE: The Parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-30)



Jesus told a story about a shepherd and His sheep to illustrate His relationship with His followers.

“Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

Therefore Jesus said again, *“Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.” . . .

Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Who is the Good Shepherd? Who are the sheep?

Complete the chart using the words from John 10:1-30.

WHAT DOES THE GOOD SHEPHERD DO FOR THE SHEEP?	HOW DO THE SHEEP RESPOND TO THE SHEPHERD?

Whose power keeps the sheep safe?

Jesus says we are doubly safe because no one can steal His sheep from His hand, and no one can steal them from the Father's hand. **Put something small in your hand like a stone or a seed. Close your hand in a fist around it. Now, wrap your other hand around that hand. That stone or seed is now doubly safe.**

How does this show a picture of God's power?

DIGGING DEEPER: CONFIDENCE EXPLAINED



Jesus said, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned” (John 3:16-18).

I. PRINCIPLE 1: CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S LOVE

What is God’s motivation to save you?

How has God shown His love for you?

What response is required from you to receive God’s love?

2. PRINCIPLE 2: CONFIDENCE IN YOUR SALVATION

God’s Word says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Three important words describe how God accepts you: **grace**, **saved**, and **faith**. These are the definitions of each:

- **Grace** is a gift that is not earned, an undeserved gift. Your relationship with Jesus is not earned by good deeds; it’s God free gift to you.

Has there ever been a time when someone gave you a gift that you did not deserve?

- **Saved** means to be rescued, spared from disaster, and kept from harm. From what have you been saved? Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” When you received Christ’s atoning death on the cross as His payment for your sins, you were rescued from eternal separation from God and eternal condemnation.

Has there ever been a time when someone rescued you from danger or harm?

- **Faith** is trust or belief. It is dependence upon another or a commitment of your mind, attitude, and actions.

Have you ever trusted someone with something very important to you, and they honored your trust?

Why is faith important for your salvation?

Can you do anything to save yourself?

3. PRINCIPLE 3: CONFIDENCE THAT YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN

Scripture tells us, “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13-14).

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us” (Ephesians 1:7-8).

“Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin” (Acts 13:38-39).

What difference does it make in your life for you to know that your sins are forgiven?

Forgiveness is a release from a penalty or a debt that you owe. When you trusted in Christ, all your sins were forgiven. Psalms 32:1-2 tells us, “Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him.”

4. PRINCIPLE 4: CONFIDENCE THAT YOU ARE GOD’S CHILD

God’s Word tells us: “all who did receive him [Jesus], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (John 1:12-13).



Knowing that God has adopted you as His own son or daughter, what difference does that make in your life?

5. PRINCIPLE 5: CONFIDENCE THAT GOD WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU

Scripture reminds us, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid” (Hebrews 13:5).

Under what circumstances might God leave or forget you?

Knowing that God will not leave you, how does this give you confidence?

6. PRINCIPLE 6: CONFIDENCE IN YOUR NEW LIFE

Look at what God’s Word says about your life, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

What has happened to your past?

Who are you, now?

When you trusted Christ to be your Savior and Lord, you began a new journey as a transformed person. God no longer looks at you according to your past life, but as someone reborn in His life. He accepts you and assures you of a future because you are now living for Him. As God’s new creation, you have a dynamic guarantee that He will produce many new qualities in your life as you grow in Him.

7. PRINCIPLE 7: CONFIDENT IN ETERNAL LIFE

Scripture assures us of this important truth, “And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:11-13).

What has God given you?

Where is eternal life found?

What if you do not have Christ?

Eternal life is not possible apart from Jesus Christ. It is a **quality** of life as well as a **quantity** of life. It is the life and character of Christ being developed **in you** over time. Eternal life is the life that we share with God forever. It is the adventure in Christ—it’s good news.

BECOMING GOOD SOIL: GROWING IN CONFIDENCE



I. ASSESSING YOUR PERSONAL CONFIDENCE

Mark the chart. On a scale of 0 to 5 (5 being very certain, 0 being not certain), **how confident** are you that:

All your sins have been forgiven?	0	1	2	3	4	5
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Jesus is in your life?	0	1	2	3	4	5
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God will never leave you?	0	1	2	3	4	5
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You have eternal life?	0	1	2	3	4	5
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You are now in God's family?	0	1	2	3	4	5
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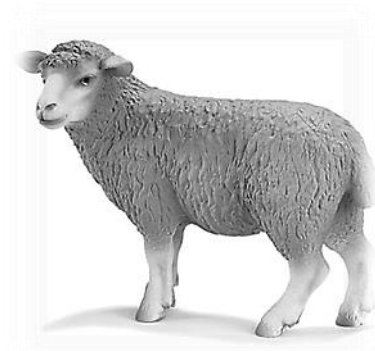
Why do you feel this way?

What is our relationship if you are God's child, and I am His child too?

2. REFLECTING AND PRAYING FOR CONFIDENCE

This is the prayer about the Good Shepherd from Psalm 23. Read it slowly and then make it a prayer in your own words.

*The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*



*You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

Take time to thank God for His guidance, protection, and salvation.

3. COMMITTING TO THESE TRUTHS

Take some time with your mentor to discuss how you will apply these truths in your daily life. **Write these commitments below.**



With your mentor and other followers, pray together, asking God to guide your steps, to strengthen and protect you, and to provide for your daily needs.

Every day this week, read Ephesians 2:8-9, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”

