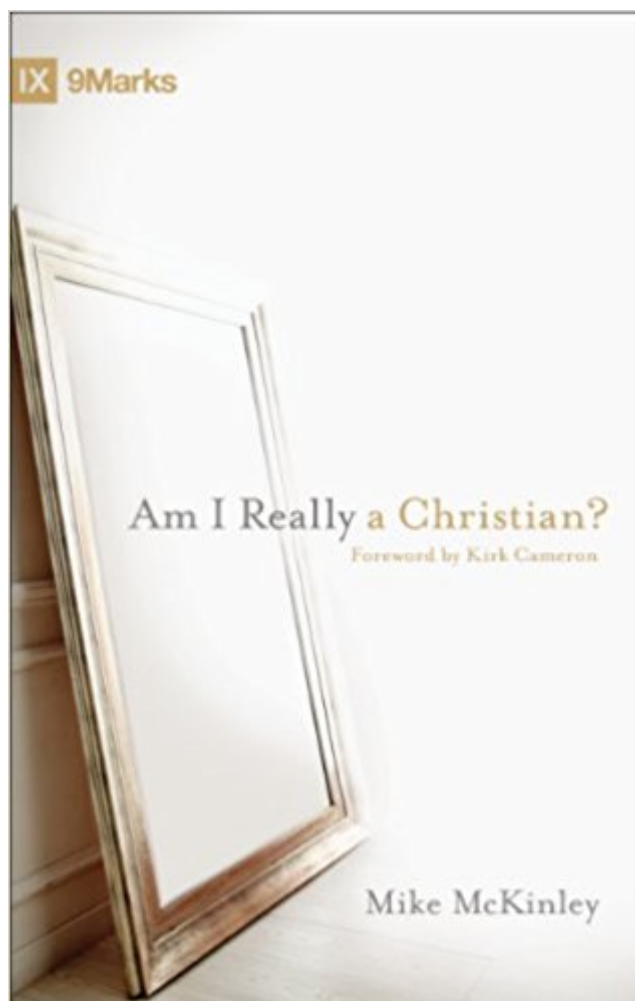


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# Am I Really A Christian? (9marks)



## Synopsis

Are you really a Christian? You may think you are, but you may not be. After all, Jesus himself said that some people will do seemingly "Christian" things in his name but will not truly know him. Or maybe you know you are not a Christian and you wonder what it really means to be one. To be sure, however, there is clarity from God's perspective. He is not confused about who does and does not know him. And though our self-awareness is certainly limited, we have been given biblical criteria to help us evaluate whether we are indeed followers of Christ. Mike McKinley shows us the importance of examining our standing with God and helps us to fearlessly ask the hard questions, ultimately allowing us to see whether we are in the faith and what exactly that entails.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is a truly important book in the most urgent sense—a book that serves the cause of Christ by raising the most important question human beings face, and helping to answer it, no less. I am thankful to McKinley for his faithfulness and for the pastoral concern that prompted him to write such an important work." —R. Albert Mohler Jr., President and Joseph Emerson Brown Professor of Christian Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary "There can be no more important question than 'Am I really a Christian?' and Mike McKinley helps us answer it with great skill. He manages to challenge nominal Christians while comforting genuine believers. McKinley's writing is accessible, engaging, and simple without ever being simplistic. I particularly appreciate the

way he encourages us to explore this crucial question in the context of a Christian community. If you're not sure where you stand before God, or you know someone who's not sure, then this is the book for you.

• Tim Chester, pastor, Grace Church, Boroughbridge, United Kingdom; faculty member, Crosslands; author, *Good News to the Poor* and *Mission Matters* "Can any question in life be as important as knowing whether you are right with God, whether you are going to Heaven or Hell? I'm quite sure that every person now in eternity with not a single exception among the billions there would affirm the urgency and priority of pursuing the answer to such a question. That's why, if you have any uncertainties about the answer for your own situation, you should read this book. Some day, on a day as real as the one in which you entered the world, as real as the one in which you are reading these words, you will enter another world. There you will remain forever. Are you ready? If not, this book will help you understand how the Bible says to prepare."

• Donald S. Whitney, professor of biblical spirituality and associate dean, School of Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; author, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* and *Family Worship* "Simple, piercing, winsome, practical, honest, direct and pastoral. If you know anyone questioning their conversion (or who should be questioning!), get this book!"

• Dave Harvey, teaching pastor, Summit Church, Naples, Florida; author, *When Sinners Say I Do* and *Am I Called?* "Really, is there anything more important to know about ourselves than whether or not we are actually Christians? People have come up with a lot of different ways of thinking about that question ranging from your ability to remember praying the prayer, to possessing a signed card in your Bible from a revival meeting, to ensuring your letter is safely tucked away in some church's filing cabinet. Examining ourselves to make sure we are in the faith is about a whole lot more than that, and McKinley offers good help for that kind of heart evaluation. This is good devotional material, good small group material; And I expect that for some, it will probably even turn out to be the first time they've truly understood the gospel of Jesus Christ."

• Greg Gilbert, Senior Pastor, Third Avenue Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky; author, *What Is the Gospel?* "Mike has always had the ability to talk about the mundane and serious aspects of life with both passion and depth in an endearing way. That is such a great and rare combination. Using those skills in his newest book, he references everyday experiences to explain much deeper and more important spiritual truths around the question of how do I know I am a Christian or not?"

• Jackson Crum, Lead Pastor, Park Community Church, Chicago, Illinois

Mike McKinley (M.Div., Westminster Theological Seminary) is senior pastor of Sterling Park Baptist Church in Sterling, Virginia. Formerly, he served on staff alongside Mark Dever at Capitol Hill

Baptist Church in Washington, DC. He is the author of a number of books, including "Am I Really a Christian?" and "Church Planting Is for Wimps."

"Am I really saved?" is a question that many Christians have likely asked themselves at some point. It's something that weighs on the mind of the newer convert or the churched individual going on 40 years in the same church. Far from being irrelevant or pointless, it's dealing with our eternal destination, and so is certainly worthy of serious consideration. Mike McKinley's work in this book is generally clear, concise writing, but he also carries a light touch throughout, and the whole book is a very easy read. McKinley covers multiple key aspects of truly being a Christian, including: -Trusting the facts of the gospel -Hating sin -Perseverance in the faith (see note below) -Loving others -Loving stuff over Christ At the same time, McKinley admits this is not an exact science, but points to verses that can give the Christian assurance in his or her faith. Additionally, he's right to point out the self-evaluation is difficult, and accountability is a big aspect of belonging to a church and fellowship with other Christians. Many of the 9Marks books are known for being geared towards church builders, pastors, and elders, but there are also books like this one that are easily accessible to even inexperienced, newer Christians. Coming in at only 160 pages, it also has discussion questions at the end of each chapter, as well as reflections on repentance and application, making it suitable for possible small groups use as well as for the individual. This is not a "scare tactics" book, but neither does it pull any punches in addressing how a Christian is instructed to act, and just where true belief needs to lie. Bear in mind this is from a Reformed position, so those not adhering to that might have some minor quibbles (I know others mentioned the perseverance chapter; given my beliefs, it wasn't an issue for me), but this is a book that should be useful to a wide range of denominational backgrounds (hey, McKinley even quotes John Wesley for one prime example, so there's that). If you or someone in your circles has been struggling with assurances of their salvation, this is a fine place to start, especially since it makes sure to back everything up with Scripture. When I read Matthew 7:21-23, I'm glad there are teachings like this out there to help assure and convict Christians to really look after their salvation.

Matthew 7:21-23 says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" This is THE scariest passage in the Bible. These people are doing

big things and yet they aren't Christians! This poses the question, "How do I know if I am saved, or if I am one of these people?" That is what Mike McKinley tries to answer in his book, "Am I Really A Christian?" He calls for self-examination. Don't get comfortable in your walk with God. We should constantly be assessing whether or not we are acting like a child of God. McKinley makes seven assumptions: You are not a Christian... 1) Just because you say you are. 2) If you haven't been born again. 3) Just because you like Jesus. 4) If you enjoy sin. 5) If you do not endure to the end. 6) If you don't love other people. 7) If you love your stuff. Our world is full of people who think Jesus was a great guy, who claim to be Christians, who are "nice", and who give to the poor. But doing these things does not make a person a Christian. McKinley does a good job of getting into the basic beliefs of every Christian. But what about doubts? At one time or another everyone has had their doubts about their faith. Does that make me not a Christian? This question is answered in the end of the book. I highly recommend this book for any Christian who is struggling with doubting their faith. The point of this book is not to scare believers into thinking that they are going to hell. The point is to encourage all of us to examine ourselves to see if there is fruit in our lives. John 14:15 - "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

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