

## May Questions and Answers: Once Saved, Always Saved

Franklin Church of Christ  
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PM Worship

### Introduction:

"Faith is simply the way we say yes to God's free gift of eternal life. Faith and salvation are not one and the same anymore than a gift and the hand that receives it are the same. Salvation or justification or adoption ... stands independently of faith. Consequently, God does not require a *constant attitude* of faith in order to be saved—only an *act* of faith.

"... Forgiveness/salvation is applied at the moment of faith. It is not the same thing as faith. And its permanence is not contingent upon the permanence of one's faith" (Stanley, Charles. Eternal Security: Can You Be Sure. p 80.).

In a desire to give Christian people confidence that no matter what they have done they will be saved, teachers such as Charles Stanley have propagated a doctrine such as the above teaching, commonly known as "Once Saved, Always Saved" or "Perseverance of the Saints." Sadly, this doctrine gives false hope to people. Let's examine the Bible to see if this doctrine is Biblical or man-made.

### Discussion:

- I. Defining the doctrine of "Once saved, always saved."
  - A. "Eternal security is that work of God which guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is possessed forever and cannot be lost" (Ryrie, Charles C. So Great Salvation. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1989, p 137.).
  - B. "... but not one of those whom Christ has once ingrafted into his body will he ever permit to perish, for in securing their salvation, he will perform what he has promised ..." (Calvin, John. Institutes of the Christian Religion. 3.24.6)
- II. First, let us note how one is saved.
  - A. According to **Romans 10:9-10**, if one desires to be saved he must believe Jesus is the Christ and confess his faith that Jesus is Lord. Of course, this presupposes having heard the gospel of Christ, for **Romans 10:17** teaches faith comes by hearing God's word.
  - B. According to **Acts 2:38**, if one desires to have the forgiveness of sins, he must repent and be baptized for the remission of his sins.
  - C. We note these passages because an important assumption of the "once saved, always saved" doctrine is unconditional salvation. After all, if a person is saved unconditionally, it doesn't matter what he does, he is saved by Christ and won't lose that salvation. However, the scripture clearly demonstrates salvation is conditional. Understand this—anything which is conditional can be forfeited.
- III. Secondly, we must note God is actively working to help us inherit eternal life.
  - A. God is not just sitting on the sidelines hoping you and I will continue in faith and be saved. He is working toward that end.
    1. **Romans 8:28-39** demonstrates that God, who sacrificed His Son for us while we were enemies, freely gives us all things—that is, all that we need in order to continue in salvation. Secondly, this passage demonstrates God will not allow anything to take us away from Him. We do not have to fret that we will accidentally be forgotten or that we will be stolen away.
    2. **II Peter 1:3** says God has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness. He has not left us alone to figure it out, but has shown us the way to eternal life. Additionally, **I Peter 1:5** says God protects us by His power through faith for salvation.
    3. **I Corinthians 10:13** teaches that God even restricts our temptations to only those things we are able to handle and provides a way of escape for us.
  - B. All this demonstrates that God desires our salvation. It demonstrates that God is actively working for our salvation. But it does not mean God forces us to be saved against our will. **Matthew 23:37-38** points out God does not force what He desires to happen regarding salvation. He leaves man up to his own free will.
    1. Therefore we ask, what if we stop loving God? ... step out of Christ? ... lose faith? ... don't take the way of escape?
    2. Is the above possible? Some say, "No." Some say, "These things are possible, but they do not matter, you will be saved anyway." What does the Bible say?
- IV. The Bible demonstrates that it is possible to leave Christ and therefore lose your salvation. Take note of the overwhelming message of scripture.
  - A. **Luke 8:6, 13** – The seed on the rocky soil believed for a while but fell away.

- B. **Matthew 18:21-35** – The servant who had been forgiven, lost forgiveness.
  - C. **Matthew 24:45-51** – Note, this was a servant, but the servant became evil not expecting the return of his master. He was destroyed.
  - D. **Matthew 25:1-13** – The passage says all 10 of the virgins were a part of Christ's kingdom, but five did not maintain preparations and were not allowed to enter the wedding with the bridegroom.
  - E. **Matthew 25:14-30** – Again the kingdom is likened to the master granting stewardship to these three men, but the one who was not a good steward was cast into the outer darkness.
  - F. **Romans 6:15-23** – Paul teaches we are not to continue in sin even though we are under grace, because that will lead us back into death out of which we have come.
  - G. **I Corinthians 10:1-13** – Paul looks at the example set for us by the Israelites, saying we can lose our salvation if we turn away from God as they did.
  - H. **Galatians 5:3-4** – This passage says we can be severed from Christ and fall from grace.
  - I. **Philippians 3:11-14** – Paul says he had not yet attained the resurrection from the dead, but had to continue to press on to that goal.
  - J. **Colossians 1:22-23** – Paul says Christ will present us holy and blameless *if* we continue ...
  - K. **Hebrews 2:1-4** – The Hebrew writer speaking of Christians, says they will not escape if they drift away, neglecting God's salvation.
  - L. **Hebrews 6:4-8** – The Hebrew writer says if we fall away after having tasted the blessings of salvation we are worthless and will end up being burned.
  - M. **Hebrews 10:26-31** – This passage again refers to Christians who willfully sin after having been set free by the truth. They can only expect a certain terrifying judgment.
  - N. **II Peter 2:20-22** – This passage speaks of those who have returned to the world's defilement even though they had once escaped them through Christ. It would have been better for them never to have been forgiven, than to have been forgiven and then return into the world.
- V. But I have sinned since becoming a Christian? Does that mean I am lost forever?
- A. There is a part of me that does not like to preach on this doctrine. I think at times we are so militant in our stand against this false doctrine that some misunderstand, believing there is no hope for them. They believe they must have sinless perfection to enter heaven in the end. This is a misunderstanding. They do not understand that Jesus died for us because we have sinned, that we might be saved by grace (**Romans 3:23-26**).
  - B. In fact, John demonstrates even the apostles sinned after being saved. But, as Christians, they, and we, have an advocate with the Father, Jesus who died for us (**I John 1:8-2:2**). Thus, all we must do is confess our sin to God and He will forgive us.
  - C. Does this mean then that I must perfectly recount every transgression I have made to God in order to be saved? No. Consider the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. The Publican went away justified, not because he had perfectly recounted all his sins to God, but because he had recognized his sinfulness and need for God's mercy (**Luke 18:13-14**). That is what God wants from us. He doesn't need us to recount all our sins, He already knows them. He wants us to humbly submit to Him for grace.
  - D. Finally, we recognize from scripture that faithfulness to God is not about where we are at the moment but about where we are growing. **II Peter 1:5-8** demonstrates that Christianity is about growth. The fact that we have room to grow does not make us lost. However, if we have stopped growing and turning to God for forgiveness when we sin, then we have lost our salvation.
  - E. This all demonstrates a balance we must maintain. That is, recognizing we are saved by grace gives us confidence even though we have continued in sin. But recognizing we are saved by grace does not give us license to continue in sin without repentance and growth, overcoming the sins which beset us.

### Conclusion:

Therefore, when the whole matter is considered, those of us who are already Christians are not allowed to sit back and do whatever we choose believing the matter of our salvation has been resolved. Rather, we must continue to grow in Christ, which means overcoming the sins into which we have fallen. We are comforted knowing we are not alone in this endeavor, God is actively working to help us be conformed to the image of His Son. However, if you are not a child of God, you are in a sad situation. You have no advocate with the Father to help in your time of sin. You can remedy that right now. Submit to Christ through faith, confession, repentance and baptism for the remission of your sins. Then you too will have God on your side working to help you to heaven.