

SHEDDING LIGHT ON BIBLICAL CONTRASTS

#12 – We Are Secure / We Are Not Secure

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand... no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand.” (John 10:28, 29)

*“No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that... I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” (1 Cor. 9:27).
“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Cor. 10:12)*

The teaching “once saved, always saved” is wonderfully assuring to sincere Christians who need encouragement. But it can give the wrong impression to someone who assumes that because he is a Christian, there is nothing to lose.

The Scriptures are full of statements indicating that a Christian is not only very secure but also quite at risk at the same time. Is this a contradiction? How can a Christian be both secure and not secure?

We Are Secure

1. Believers will never perish, nor be snatched from the Father’s hand (**John 10:27-29**).
2. Those to whom God has given the Holy Spirit need not be afraid that He will change His mind or take away what He has given (**Romans 11:29**).
3. Since God finishes everything He begins, He will surely do this with our salvation (**Philippians 1:6**).
4. Since God can be trusted, we can be assured that He will fortify us and guard us from anything that could destroy us (**2 Thessalonians 3:3**).
5. God has pledged His power as a guarantee of complete salvation (**2 Timothy 1:12; 1 Peter 1:5**).

We Are Not Secure

1. We may fall into serious sin just as the children of Israel did after being delivered from Egypt (**1 Corinthians 10:1-12**).
 2. We may, because of continued, wilful sin, unconfessed sin, lose our health & even our life (**1 Corinthians 11:30**).
 3. We may lose future rewards (**Colossians 2:18; 2 John 8; Revelation 3:11**).
 4. We may lose our spiritual influence (**Psalms 51:12-13; 1 Corinthians 9:27**).
 5. We may lose the spiritual protection of the Body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 5:1-8**).
 6. We may lose our good standing with fellow Christians (**1 Corinthians 5:9-13**).
- (cont’d... P.2)

7. We may lose the approval of God (**Revelation 2:1-7**).
8. We may lose our joy, peace of mind and comfort in the Lord (**Hebrews 12:1-11; James 3:13-17**).
9. We may lose our good conscience and confidence in prayer (**1 John 3:20-23**).

Explanation

Jesus assured those who follow Him that He has given them “eternal life” and that they are held securely in “My hand” and in “My Father’s hand” (**John 10:28, 29**). But many other Scriptures make it clear that a Christian still has much to lose.

This dual emphasis is necessary for three reasons. First, true believers need to be assured that nothing can remove them from their place of safety – they are securely held by both the so and the father. Second, those who are really saved but embrace wrong teaching or backslide into evil practices need to be warned that they have placed themselves under the chastening hand of God (**1 Corinthians 11:30-32; Hebrews 12:6; 1 Peter 4:17-19**). Third, those who stray from dependence must be aware that they stand to lose far more than they can afford. The Bible must be taken seriously when it warns, *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that He will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart”* (Gal. 6:7-9).

Resolution

The Bible assures believers that their salvation is secure, but many of the joys, benefits & privileges that accompany salvation can be lost through disobedience and rebellion.

Application

- Eternal security should be emphasized with people who are sincere in their faith but who struggle with fear that they may not be able to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.
- The possibility of severe and costly loss should be emphasized with those who profess faith but show signs of spiritual carelessness or make grace an excuse for sin.
- Those who have shown clear evidence of personal faith in Christ should be reminded that a loss of peace, joy or self-control does not mean a loss of eternal security and heaven.
- A professing believer who is living sinfully should be encouraged to read & reflect on a passage like **1 John 3:4-9**, which declares that someone who is born again will be characterized by righteousness.

~~~~~

