

January 27, 2019 -

Hebrews 6:4- 8 -

Progressing onto Maturity

Introduction:

Our lives are filled with tests. There are all kinds of tests. We take driver's tests, drug tests, stress tests, pregnancy tests, sobriety tests, eye tests, and doctors have to run health related test. Test can become a living nightmare especially when waiting for those medical results. But it can be a nightmare for students too. For example, here are a few questions that appeared on a history test. The answers to the questions will surprise you. "How long did the Hundred Years War last?" seems obvious, but the answer is 116 years. Or -"What country manufactures Panama hats?" the correct answer is Ecuador. Here's another: In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution? It's November. Don't you just hate those trick questions? Like it or not, tests are a part of life and it shouldn't be any different to test whether a person is on the right track spiritually? This is the most important test of all and God never exploits with trick questions...

**Transition:**

The Bible speaks clearly that there is a way to know with assurance that you have eternal life. We can know for sure that we are Christians by taking the assurance test. Somebody once said, if you could have it and not know it, you could lose it and not miss it. But the truth is, if you have salvation, you know it; and if you have it and know it, you can never lose it.

*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. I John 5:13*

In the day that Hebrews was written and even today people believe there must be more to be saved and thus we have ...

II The Confusion (6:4-6)

1. One of the most heated debates over any New Testament passage is focused on this text. The question is simple: Are these people with these impressive spiritual experiences in fact Christians? Some believe this phrase means bona-fide Christians can lose their salvation. This view holds that God supplies the grace to those who are initially saved, but the perseverance of salvation depends on good works. Therefore, any Christian is capable of being lost again. Others believe the people addressed here were not true believers. However, they were once enlightened (6:4a). The word translated enlightened (photizo, fo-tiz'-oh) refers to the illumination, of true believers. It is the same Greek verb used in Hebrews 10:32.

2. Being enlightened, or illuminated, obviously indicates an experience of true salvation. But there is more. Such people have also tasted of the heavenly gift (6:4c). This means they experienced the goodness of God's Word, and saw its goodness at work in them. To claim these people have tasted but did not eat is a very weak argument. For example, what does the last phrase of Hebrews 2:9 *that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man*. On the cross, Jesus Christ surely did not simply sample death! He fully experienced it.

3. These Hebrews had been enlightened by the Word of God. They were also partakers of the Holy Ghost (6:4d). As partakers they were indwell with the Holy Spirit; it has to do with

receiving and having fellowship with the Holy Spirit. The word for partner in the Greek is “me'-to-khos” meaning sharing in, partaking. Note the same Greek word is used in Hebrews 3:1.

But most importantly it is impossible ... to renew them again unto repentance (6:4a & 6). You can't renew something you never had in the first place. In light of these facts, I believe these would have to be true believers. If these are genuine Christians who “lost their salvation,” the terrible fact is that they can *never* regain it.

4. Well, then what does this passage mean? The first verse in this chapter gives us the key to understanding the entire passage. The people in question were laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works (6:1 b). They were trying to lay again the foundation of their spiritual life with good works that are really dead works.

Illustration: \*A business man who was well known for his ruthless behavior once told Mark Twain, “Before I die I mean to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will climb Mount Sinai and read the Ten Commandments aloud at the top.” Mark Twain said, “I have a better idea. You could stay in Boston and keep them.”

\* Sometimes our words and our actions do not coincide. A U.S. News and World Report survey found 88% of American adults are certain they are going to heaven. Ironically, only sixty seven percent are actually certain there is a heaven.

5. The writer of Hebrews exhorts, “*let us move on to perfection, or maturity* (6:1). If we can't be saved again, what do believers do when we sin and fall away from the Lord? The answer is in Hebrews 6:6. The Greek word for “apostasy” (apostasia, uh-pos-tuh-see'-uh) means to revolt, defect, or permanently forsake the faith. This is not the verb used here. The verb translated fall away (parapipto, par-uh-pip'-toe) literally means “to fall alongside” (para, “aside”; pipto, “to fall”). It is to stray from the right path and fall down in the Christian life. The steps of a good man, or saved person, are ordered by the LORD and the Lord delights in his way (Psa. 37:23). ***Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth [him with] his hand.***

Others explain it by saying that this is all merely a hypothetical warning (in light of the statement in Hebrews 6:9. In this thinking, the writer to the Hebrews never intended to say that his readers were really in danger of damnation.

### III The Clarification

1. To understand Hebrews 6:4-6 requires knowing the difference between repentance and confession. Repentance is used synonymously with salvation, or conversion, in the New Testament. For example, God doesn't want anyone to perish (2 Pet. 3:9c). Instead, what does He want (3:9d)? The writer of Hebrews is explaining that when we fall in our Christian life, it is impossible for us to be renewed through another conversion experience. That would require crucifying the Son of God afresh, subjecting Him to public shame (6:6).

2. To help clear this up, answer this question, “When you were saved, where did you go for your salvation?” You went to Calvary-to the cross right? The cross is the only place a lost

person can go for forgiveness. However, after being saved, when we sin, we go confidently to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy (4:16).

There are some teachers and brothers in Christ who would teach us that it proves you can lose your salvation. They have got some real problems. Because if that teaches you can lose it, it also teaches you can't get it back again because it says, "If you fall away, it is impossible to renew you to repentance."

3. I believe the writer to the Hebrews means that if they retreat back to Judaism, all the religious "repentance" in the world will do them no good. Retreating from Christianity into the "safe" ideas and customs of their former religious experience is to forsake Jesus, and to essentially crucify Him again.

Christians confess their sins. We repent one time at the cross; we continually **confess** our sins in the throne room. When we stumble, or fall away, if we confess our sins, because God is faithful and just, He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn 1:9). It is impossible for a Christian seeking forgiveness to be saved again; it would make a mockery of Christ's once-for-all atoning death.

His sacrificial death is sufficient to handle all our sins-past, present, and future because salvation is the gift of God (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8).

#### IV The Confidence

1. The Bible is absolutely clear about eternal security. 1 John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

2. Romans chapter 8, --- **"What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword?" Verse 37, "Nay." Verse 38, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

3. First Peter 3...1 Peter 1:3, **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope to an inheritance, uncorrupt...incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God."**

#### Conclusion

One reason many Christians are not the light and salt is they have doubts about their salvation. The true measure of that success is demonstrated by followers of Christ who love God, walk after Christ committed to living holy lives and love each other.