

Life Principles Center

Course: Your Eternal Security

T2_CD_L1: Eternal Security: Where It all Begins (MH120)

Introduction

This course, entitled Your Eternal Security, is one of my favorite subjects. You see, I once struggled with this issue. For years I did not believe in the truth "once saved, always saved." Even into my seminary years, I engaged in countless debates and took a stand against this idea. However, the Lord began to work in my life, and He opened my eyes to the glorious truth of the unending, inescapable salvation offered to each and every believer in Jesus Christ.

During this time of discovery, the Holy Spirit showed me important truths from Scripture about eternal security, and I pray that you will benefit from them just as I did. Pay careful attention to this study. I assure you: your eternal security is one of the most important issues you will face as a believer in Christ Jesus.

Lesson 1, Section 1

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 1, you should be able to:

- A. Meditate upon John 3:16, and understand its significance.
- B. Understand the definition of eternal security.

Scripture

Read John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Lesson 1

When we talk about certainty and security, we all seem to fall into one of several categories. Some people are unsaved and know that they are unsaved. For these, there is *no security*. Other people are unsaved but think that they are saved. They have a *false sense of security*. Then there are those who are saved and know that they are saved; they are *sure*. Likewise, there are people who are saved but are uncertain about their salvation; they are *unsure*. Still others are saved but are not sure that it is forever; we can call this group *insecure*. Finally, there are those who are saved and know without a doubt that their salvation is everlasting; these are the people we call *eternally secure*.

Which one of these categories do you fall into? My friend, I want to tell you very clearly that eternal security is not simply a denominational dogma, philosophy, or doctrine. Eternal security is the truth of the Word of God. And it is a truth that, once believed, will set you free from the anxiety of uncertainty about where you're going to go when you die and come face to face with God.

Q1: Take a few minutes to consider your own belief about your salvation and eternal security. Choose which of these BEST applies to you.

- A. I have no security; I realize that I am unsaved.*
- B. I think I'm saved, but I am not sure.*
- C. I know that I once was saved, but I am not sure about now.*
- D. I know that I once was saved, then I lost my salvation, and now I've regained it.*
- E. I'm saved. But I don't know that my salvation will last forever.*
- F. I know that I am saved now and forever.*
- G. I tend to waver back and forth, one day feeling secure in my salvation lasting forever, and the next day not being certain.*
- H. I am not sure where I stand on this belief.*

I want you to know that this is not a realization that came easily to me. I struggled with this issue for many years. Click the audio image on your screen to hear my own testimony about how I came to understand the Bible's blessed assurance of my eternal security. If your computer is not equipped with a sound card or speakers, please read the accompanying transcript.

As we begin this course of study, let's start with the basic question: *what do we mean by "eternal security"?* That's a fine question. Simply put, **eternal security is that work of God that guarantees the salvation He offers in Christ, once received, is possessed forever and can never be lost.** Once we accept God's gracious offer of salvation, no one on earth can take that gift away from us.

The reason many people do not understand eternal security is that they do not have a biblical understanding of salvation. It makes sense that if you have some confusion about how you got saved, you will also be confused about how you remain saved. So, as we begin our look into eternal security, I want us to start by examining what the Word says about salvation.

You see, there are many, many people in our churches who would consider themselves "saved," but if you asked them, they probably could

not tell you how or when they received that salvation. Most likely, they would refer to some work they have done in the past, such as joining a church, talking to a pastor, or serving in some form of ministry. What is lacking is any mention of their personal, saving experience of Jesus Christ.

First and foremost, salvation is deliverance from eternal death and the provision of eternal life. This is the message of the most beloved and well-known Bible verse, John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” The very mention of deliverance implies that there is a serious problem from which we need rescuing. What is that problem? Quite simply, the problem is sin.

Q2: True or False? Eternal security guarantees that our salvation (deliverance from eternal separation from God)—once we have received it—is ours forever, never to be taken away and never to be lost—no matter what we do.

Many other lessons in *Faith Foundations* examine the problem of sin. We know that at the root of sin is our own rebellion toward God. Moreover, the result of that sin is death. (Romans 6:23) John 3:16 echoes this by asserting that those who do not believe in Christ will “perish”; this idea is also put forth in Matthew 25:46 as the unrighteous are sent away into “eternal punishment.” This death, however, is not an annihilation (absolute ending), but rather a state of eternal separation from God.

But, we have a great hope. John 3:16 also says that because of His amazing love for every single one of us, God provided a way for us to escape that sin-death. The solution? “He gave His only begotten Son.” This states very clearly that our salvation is a gift from God. If it is a gift, then that means we did absolutely nothing to earn or deserve it. Rather, God simply gave it to us because that is what He wanted to do. So, if our salvation is a gift given to us straight from almighty God, there is nothing on earth that can take that gift away from us.

J1: Carefully read John 3:16. Use the verse to answer the following questions in your journal.

- A. What was God’s motivation for our salvation?*
- B. What did God’s motivation require of Him?*
- C. Knowing that salvation is a gift, what is our responsibility in salvation?*
- D. Once we’ve acted on our responsibility, what is the result?*

E. How long does that result last?

Objectives

Lesson 1, Section 2

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 1, you should be able to:

- A. Understand the meaning of the term “eternal life.”
- B. Evaluate your own understanding of eternal security.

Jesus came into the world for one reason. He did not come to inspire us to be better people. He did not come to provide an example of good behavior. He did not come to deliver powerful teaching. Yes, all these things are results of His work, but that is not *why* He came. My friend, Jesus Christ came into the world for the primary purpose of dying. And, when He died, He took all the sin of the world upon Himself—all my sin, all your sin, and all sin past and present—and took that sin to the grave. When He rose, the sin did not. Therefore, He won the ultimate victory for all people; all we must do now is receive that precious gift.

So, *what is eternal life?* In a real sense, eternal life is the person of Jesus Christ living on the inside of each one of us who have accepted Him as Lord and Savior. There are two important aspects that we must consider. First, eternal life is a *quality of life*. It is a life that is bent toward God, that desires to do the will of God, and that desires to walk uprightly before the Lord. Second, eternal life is a *quantity of life*. In this, eternal life is exactly what the name implies: it is an endless, forever kind of life.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, one who has responded to the saving message of Jesus and invited Him into your heart and life, then you have already stepped into this eternal, forever life. Even if you have never realized it or given it much thought before, or even if you have trusted Jesus and yet have never settled the issue of eternal security, let me assure you that you are indeed sealed forever in the name of Jesus. Once you accept that glorious gift of salvation and step into eternal life, it is yours forever.

Q3: *True or False? Eternal life refers simply to the quantity of endless life that exists for those who have entrusted their lives to Jesus Christ.*

Now that we have laid this groundwork in this important study, we will continue in the next lesson by asking that crucial question, *does a belief in eternal security really matter in our Christian walks?* Until then, I

pray that the Lord places a burning passion in your heart to settle this matter once and for all.

Prayer

Father God, when we think of all the different ways people think about the saving work of Christ, we just want to thank you for the truth you have established in your Word. Some of us in this study may have a no sense of security; others may have a false sense of security. Some may be unsure, others insecure. But God, we praise you that you have spelled out in your Living Word the reasons why we can know the truth about our eternal security. And we ask that your Holy Spirit move in a mighty way throughout this course, so that we may have a right understanding of the power and lasting effects of the cross of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory:

The Scripture memory assignment for this course is given below. Be sure to commit this passage to memory before moving on to the next lesson. Then, practice reciting it over and over throughout this course.

1 John 5:13

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

This lesson may have raised many questions in your mind. Create a new journal entry and use it as an opportunity to ask God your questions. Then, wait to listen for His answers. If you have no questions upon completing this lesson, write a prayer of thanks to God that reveals your understanding of John 3:16.

Transcript of Audio/Video Teaching Clip “Eternal Security Testimony”

Now, I've not always believed in eternal security. In fact, I think as we grow in our Christian life we do change our minds about some of the things that we believe and I think that's part of growing in the Word of God. And you'll recall that the Bible says, at first, when you and I are saved, we have the milk of the Word. That is, there are some things that you and I understand that are simple to understand. Then, as we grow older in our Christian life, we begin to get a deeper understanding of the word of God.

And so, we change our beliefs about some things. Not so much that we were wrong but that we grow in our understanding. I've not always believed in eternal security so I'm not preaching this series as a Baptist doctrine. I am simply preaching it as a biblical truth.

When I was twelve years of age and I walked down the aisle and knelt to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior I didn't know anything about eternal security. I just knew that Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins, and I received Him as my personal Savior that day and I began to live a Christian life.

It wasn't very long before I realized I had a real struggle on my hands of living the Christian life because I grew up in a church that taught that you maintain that relationship by your behavior, by your good deeds. And when I was saved—and you've probably heard me share this before—the pastor had me come up to the front behind the pulpit and tell the people what Christ had done for me. And I simply said—I still remember—“I don't know everything He's done for me today but I know that He saved me.”

And he said to me, “Charles, you grow up and be a good boy and, one of these days, you'll die and go to heaven.” Now with all the sincerity of his heart he meant exactly what he said because he was a dear man of God who loved the Lord and who certainly loved me. But, what he was saying to me is that from now on, now that you've been saved, if you want to maintain that you've got to be a good boy. When you tell any twelve-year-old boy he's got to be good to be saved then you've got a problem on your hands.

And so, I began my Christian life like a lot of other people began their Christian life of trying to do good, get in the Bible, read the Scripture, study the Word of God, pray, do all the good things that I knew how to do. But I can remember many times and remember exactly where I

lived at the time—and I can remember getting down by my bed at nighttime confessing or repenting of something in my life that was not right and knowing that, according to what I had been taught, I was lost; that I was no longer saved. But, remembering even until today how I felt.

I know that's what I had been taught and what I believe but somehow, on the inside, my spirit did not witness to the fact that I was lost. I kept feeling that somehow God loved me, somehow that I wasn't cast out, that God hadn't walked off and left me.

And so, in high school and in college I would argue with the best. And I had my whole arsenal of verses that I could pull out and fire away. And, like a machine gun, I could rattle them off and tell you why, if you sinned after you were saved, you were lost and dying and going to hell. Until, finally, nobody wanted to talk to me about Jesus Christ or anything else. Because, ultimately, we got around to that subject.

But, somewhere along the way I remember even in some verses of Scripture that were my favorite ones to defend what I believe when I would read them in the context every once in a while I would get a little unsettled. Until, finally, over a period of time as I kept reading and kept studying and kept arguing and kept defending my position, somewhere along the way I began to question, maybe, how right I was. As difficult as it was because I had defended it so openly. But, once in a while, when I would get a passage that was one of my favorite ones and I read it in its context some of my arguments began to crumble. And until, finally, one day sitting in a Greek class in seminary and translating a particular passage, all of a sudden, the light dawned on me.

And I think most of the things that happened I would have thought, "Lord, " You know, I wanted to walk around the room and praise God and thank God. For the first time in my life I was eternally secure but I remember the thing that impressed my heart the most. I sat there and thought, "God, since I was twelve years old I've been eternally secure. And all my trying and all my works and all my fears of being lost were absolutely to no avail." And how many times I must have gone to bed at night wondering whether I was saved or not. And how many times I tried to do good and to be good in order to maintain what I believed I had found as a twelve-year-old boy at the altar.

And so, I am saying to you today, I understand why many of you who believe that you can be saved and be lost—I understand exactly how you feel. And the purpose for this series is not to alienate you, not in any fashion to say that you're all wrong but to simply declare a truth of the Word of God that, once I understood it, God set me free about my eternal

security and about my eternal destination. And it is my desire that you would prayerfully listen to this series with an open heart, not condemning before investigation, to be sure that there may be something out there that God has provided for you that you may have missed. And my prayer is that if you've never been saved that even before this service is over that you'll give your life to Christ.

And if you have been saved that you may understand what it means to be eternally secure in order that you might enjoy what God has provided for all of His children.

Life Principles Center
Course: Your Eternal Security
T2_CD_L2: Does it Really Matter? (RH120)

Introduction: This lesson is divided into two sections to help you complete the entire lesson at your convenience. In order to renew your mind with God's Word and give you an accurate view of Him, it's very important that you take time to complete each assignment before moving on to the next lesson.

Lesson 2, Section 1

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 2, you should be able to:

- A. Understand the scriptural basis for eternal security.
- B. Memorize 1 John 5:13.

Scripture

Read 1 John 5:13

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.

Lesson 2

We have already seen that the heart of understanding eternal security is having a clear awareness of our salvation. You'll remember that true biblical salvation is deliverance from eternal death and the possession of eternal life. And, of course, this happens when we trust the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, believing that He died on the cross for our sin. The Bible testifies that once we have made that decision, we are eternally secure—that is, we can never lose the salvation that has been freely given to us by almighty God.

In this lesson, we will explore the important question, *does it really matter whether or not we believe in the eternal security of the believer?* My friend, let me tell you from my own experience as a Christian and a pastor, it does indeed make a world of difference. This is perhaps the most important truth for you to accept as a follower of Jesus. The matter of your eternal security affects every aspect of your walk of faith, and Scripture tells us that we can indeed know for certain that we are forever bound to Christ.

Q1: Which verse in the Bible tells us that we can know for certain that we are eternally secure? (Choose one.)

- A. 1 John 4:7
- B. Job 19:25
- C. John 21:15
- D. 1 John 5:13
- E. None of the above

Now does this mean that we have a free license to sin because we do not have to fear losing our salvation? No it does not. Eternal security is not a loophole for continuing in any sin. Rather, if you know you are saved and secure by the grace of God, you can be equally motivated to praise God and worship Him louder and longer than before. Eternal security is not an open door to sin, but is instead a gateway to even more praise.

People who refuse to accept eternal security usually do so for one of two reasons. First, many people believe that your salvation can be lost if you walk away from your faith, turning your back on Jesus and in effect giving back the salvation that God freely gave you. Second, and this is widely held, many believe that you can lose your salvation by “falling from grace,” or as the result of sin after your salvation experience. This argument asserts that over time, God can simply lose patience with a sinful believer and then turn His back on that person.

The problem with this idea is that it is not biblical. You see, God cannot be measured by human standards of patience and grace. The grace of God is that unmerited favor and love exhibited toward us unconditionally, and it has absolutely nothing to do with our conduct. God did not act to save you because of your conduct, but because of His unfailing love and grace. (Romans 5:5-8) For these same reasons, He will not turn away from you after your salvation.

In 1 John 5:13, the apostle John shares this encouragement, “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.” So, the Word of God testifies that we can truly “know that (we) have eternal life.” We don’t have to *wish* we do or *hope* we do; Scripture says we can *know* that we are eternally secure.

J1: Memorize 1 John 5:13. Now, read back through the first part of 1 John 5. What do you think God meant by “these things”? How do they apply to your personal understanding of eternal security?

Lesson 2, Section 2

Objectives: *At the end of this section of Lesson 2, you should be able to:*

- A. Understand the scriptural basis for eternal security.
- B. Recognize false beliefs to which you're sensitive or vulnerable.

Let's take a few moments to examine some areas in our lives that are affected by our belief—or disbelief—in eternal security. **First, our view of eternal security affects our assurance of salvation.** We studied this in detail in the previous lesson. Just to summarize, we can be confident in our eternal security because our complete salvation is based solely on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. We were saved only by what Jesus did on the cross, which means that we can do absolutely nothing to improve upon that saving act.

Now, do not miss the importance of this understanding. If God didn't need our help in getting us saved, then He certainly does not need our help in keeping us saved. So, if you believe that you can lose your salvation because of some sin or behavior in your life, then you are essentially saying that God's gift of salvation is somewhat dependent on how you act. This is not so! Rather, as we see throughout *Faith Foundations*, Jesus paid your sin-debt in full; there is nothing that we can do to add to or take away from that salvation. (1 John 2:1-2)

Second, the matter of eternal security leaves the whole question of God's forgiveness at stake. Let me ask you, *how much sin did Jesus die for?* Scripture says that He died for all of it—all sin past, present, and future—for all people of all time. (John 3:16; 1 John 2:1-2) Many of us fall victim to overwhelming guilt because of sin we commit after we have been saved. We may think, "Well, Jesus gave me such a beautiful salvation and I just spoiled it with my sin." We tend to divide our sin into two halves: the sin before our salvation and the sin after. What we fail to realize, though, is that from the perspective of the cross, *all* of our sin was future. And, according to Scripture, Jesus died for *all* of it, even those sins we haven't committed yet.

Third, eternal security affects the whole idea of salvation by faith. If we believe that we can lose our salvation because of things that we do, then we are implying that in some way, our *works* are a necessary component of salvation. This is completely unscriptural. Paul makes this very clear in Galatians 2:16, in which he argues that salvation

comes through faith in Jesus alone, leaving no room for our own good works.

This is a big problem for many people, because to some degree, we all struggle with a pride problem. There is simply something within a man that makes him want to deserve what he gets. My friend, when you stand before Jesus, you deserve absolutely nothing. There is not one thing you can do to deserve what you have been given, and this is the reason why many people simply cannot come to Christ. They refuse to believe that such a wonderful gift—salvation—was given to them free of charge.

Of course, there are many more issues than these three that we could discuss, but what we have tried to do here is simply call out the major areas that are affected. I cannot stress how important it is for you to grasp these concepts. Without a solid understanding of eternal security, your walk with Christ will be weighed down unnecessarily. If that is the case, how can you hope to spread the absolute joy of the Gospel with anyone else? For your sake and for the sake of anyone who looks to you for spiritual insight, I pray that the issue of eternal security becomes closely knit to your heart.

J2: Concerning the previous three reasons, which of them most entices you to not believe in eternal security? Take some time to look up the Scriptures mentioned in this section of the lesson. Copy and paste into your journal any verses that specifically apply to your heart and write down how they combat a lie to which you've been vulnerable.

Now that we have seen that what we believe about eternal security really does matter, we will take a bold step of confidence in the next lesson of this course as we study *Eternal Security: You Can Be Sure!*

Prayer

Lord Jesus, only by Your grace are we saved. Only by Your love do we stand here and sit here today as recipients of Your grace and Your goodness and loving kindness and tender mercy. I pray for that person who has thought about it but not very seriously, that person who has thought about it very seriously, that person who has planned to but has put it off, that person who has not understood but now understands. Oh Father, I pray, in the name of Jesus, that everyone hearing this message who is unsaved would make this decision here and now, to place their trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sin and receive Him as their personal Savior and then allow You to begin Your wonderful work in

their life; building them up, making them worthy vessels to serve You all the days of their life that their life may count for Your glory and Your honor. I pray for those who are under deep conviction but who are still resistant to remember that there is a line somewhere out there known only to You—at which time they will hear the Gospel for the last time, they will hear Your invitation for the last time, they will feel the tugging of the Holy Spirit for the last time, and then life will be over and there will be no second chance. Oh dear God, speak to that somebody lest they make the eternal mistake of dying without Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

1 John 5:13

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

J3: Spend the next few minutes re-reading Section Two of this lesson. Then, record in your journal—in your own words—three fallacies about eternal security. Next, take note of the scriptural truth that combats those false beliefs.

Life Principles Center
Course: Your Eternal Security
T2_CD_L3: You Can Be Sure! Part 1 (MH190)

Introduction: Second Timothy 2:15 says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." For that reason, we encourage you to complete each assignment before progressing to the next lesson. This lesson is structured with two separate sections to help you maximize your study time.

Lesson 3, Section 1

Objective: At the end of this section of Lesson 3, you should be able to:
A. Understand three biblical reasons why you can trust in eternal security.

Scripture

Read John 10:27-30

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.

Lesson 3

So far in this course, we have worked to gain a solid understanding of what eternal security is and why it is so important to us as believers. Just to review, we have seen that eternal security can be defined as that work of God by which He guarantees the gift of salvation, once received, is possessed forever and cannot be lost. In this lesson, we will examine three reasons why you can be absolutely certain that—having received Jesus as Savior—you are eternally secure.

The first reason I want to give you is the most powerful, and certainly the most personal. And that is, we can be certain of our eternal security because **it is the personal promise of Jesus Christ.** In John 10:27-30, we see the very words of Jesus making this vow, "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and **no one will snatch them out of My hand.**"

This passage also refers to believers as Jesus' "sheep." Now, sheep are known for wandering and for getting themselves into trouble, but they are also known for following their shepherd very closely. In biblical

times, shepherds were intimately connected to their flocks. When danger struck, the sheep were wholly unable to protect themselves; therefore, it was the responsibility of the shepherd to put himself between his flock and the aggressor. This is the image that Jesus uses to describe His relationship with His children. Though we often wander, our Good Shepherd is always there to guide, protect, and care for us.

I do not know how Jesus could have been more conclusive and convincing than He is in this passage. His words leave no room for doubt or speculation. He states very clearly that He has not only provided for our eternal salvation, but also that no one has the power to steal that gift from us. In His words, we are held safe and secure in the powerful hand of almighty God.

So, the idea that we can lose our salvation only leaves two options. If a person can be saved and then lose that salvation, then that means Jesus made a promise that He could not keep. Or, if we can lose our salvation—knowing that we are held tightly in the hand of God—then that must mean that there is someone or something in the universe that can overpower God Himself. Now, as we see throughout *Faith Foundations*, God is the all-powerful, all-knowing Creator of the universe. **As believers, we must reject these two options** because both show Jesus and the Father as either weak or unable to keep their promises.

The second reason we can be assured of our eternal security is the **continuing intercession of Christ on our behalf**. We see this clearly in Hebrews 7:25, “Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” You see, Jesus is continually in the process of watching over us, caring for us, and making intercession for us to the Father. This means that we are unceasingly in the mind and thoughts of Jesus, who, seated at the right hand of God (Romans 8:34), always speaks to the Father on our behalf. (1 John 2:1-2)

J1: Knowing that Jesus is personal and is constantly praying for you, and recalling what you have learned about God’s character in Faith Foundations, how does that impact your belief in eternal security?

The third reason we can be confident of our eternal security is **our inseparable relationship with Christ**. I cannot think of a better passage to describe this incredible union than Romans 8:31-39. Take a moment now to read those wonderful verses.

Q1: True or False? *You can be certain of your everlasting salvation in Jesus Christ because of Jesus' personal promise to us, His prayers on our behalf, and His commitment to the relationship we have with Him.*

- **True:** *Yes, you answered correctly! Three reasons we can be confident in our eternal salvation are: Jesus' personal promise to us in John 10:27-30, His prayer for us according to Hebrews 7:25, and our inseparable relationship with Jesus as described in Romans 8:31-39.*
- **False:** *No, your answer is incorrect. Three reasons we can be confident in our eternal salvation are: Jesus' personal promise to us in John 10:27-30, His prayer for us according to Hebrews 7:25, and our inseparable relationship with Jesus as described in Romans 8:31-39. Please review the previous material and the Scriptures listed here to help you understand the truth of eternal security.*

Lesson 3, Section 2

Objective: At the end of this section of Lesson 3, you should be able to:

- A. Answer three important questions regarding eternal security.

In this passage, Romans 8:31-39, the apostle Paul asks three important questions that have to do with our eternal security:

1. *Who can bring a charge against God's elect?* (Romans 8:33) You see, every single child of God has been elected, foreknown, called, justified, and glorified. All of us in Christ have been set firmly in God's household. (1 Timothy 3:14-15) Therefore, Paul's question asks *who can accuse us of anything and make it stick?* God has *already* justified us—declared us not guilty—so we have already been freed of the penalty of any accusation.
2. *Who is the one who condemns?* (Romans 8:34) If no one can even make a charge of sin against us, then certainly no one can condemn us. What could anyone condemn us with that has not already been paid for at the Cross of Christ? Nothing! Jesus' death on the cross paid the debt for all our sin—past, present, and future. Not only that, but He still intercedes for us continually.
3. *Who can separate us from the love of Christ?* (Romans 8:35) This is the heart of the issue. This is the question on which the matter of eternal security rests: *once in Christ, can anything pull us out of His hand?* Paul answers this question by giving us a short list of things that often seem to pull against us.
 - a. *Events.* In verse 35, Paul lists all manner of events and tragedies that happen in our lives. Why would he name things like this? Because these are the kind of events that test our

faith. These are often the things that make us question God's sovereignty. However, Scripture assures us that even these worrisome moments in our lives can never pull us away from Christ. (Romans 8:37)

- b. *Time*. In verse 38, Paul declares that there is no time or season in our lives that can separate us from Jesus. He specifically says that no time in life, nor death, nor anything in the present time, nor anything in the future can take us away from God.
- c. *People*. Also in verse 38, Paul shows that no one—no angel, no principality, and no power—can pull us out of God's mighty hand.
- d. *Places*. In verse 39, Paul wraps up this passage by showing that there is nowhere we can go where God cannot or will not find us. There is no "height nor depth" where God is not with us. (Psalm 139:7-12)

J2: After reading Romans 8:35-38, evaluate your own history. Even if you're absolutely certain that your salvation is secure, take a few minutes to go through this exercise. Ask God for insight, and record specific instances related to events, times or seasons, people, and places in your life that have, or could have, made you question the eternity of your salvation.

My friend, do you see how precious this gift of eternal security is? No matter what events have transpired in your life to dissuade you or steal your confidence, you can be assured that your salvation has always been and always will be protected. In Christ, we are held tightly and securely in the hand of the Father. Now, this does not mean that we won't stray from Him. Sadly, many believers even turn away from Him outright from time to time. However, our lapses in faith do not overpower God's grasp. If we are indeed secure in His hand, then even though we may wriggle around, He won't let us go.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, neither our lips nor our lungs nor our voice nor our strength nor our minds could ever begin all together to formulate the kind of expression that would be adequate to say to You, "I really love You." Teach us how to say it out of our heart. Teach us how to sing it out of

our spirit. Teach us how to express it in our life and teach us how to keep that wonderful thought upper most in our thinking.

And Lord, I pray for somebody who has heard this message or who is hearing it right now who has never been saved that they either have prayed that simple prayer or will, in their own words, pray it and ask You to save them. I pray for those Father, who really believe they are saved but who, somehow, just cannot grasp in their mind that once they are saved, they are saved forever. Would You help them to understand that the purpose of this series is not to be critical of what someone else thinks or what they believe, but simply to expound the truth in order that multitudes of very saved people who love You would be free from the bondage of doubt, trying to hold on, trying to be good enough, trying to work hard enough, trying to perform enough, trying to get accepted, hoping, praying that one of these days they may be saved? Oh God, that they may be freed from all of that and be able to rest in the atoning death that You provided at Calvary for all of us is my prayer in Your wonderful name, Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

1 John 5:13

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Carefully read John 10:29. Then, answer the following questions in your journal:

- I. Who is speaking here?*
- J. Who gave you to the speaker?*
- K. Who is greater than God?*

Consider this verse throughout the next few days and ask God to cement it in your heart with deep belief. As needed, record the insights that the Holy Spirit gives you about this verse.

Life Principles Center
Course: Your Eternal Security
T2_CD_L4: You Can Be Sure! Part 2 (MH190)

Introduction: Second Timothy 2:15 says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." For that reason, we encourage you to complete each assignment before progressing to the next lesson. This lesson is structured with two separate sections to help you maximize your study time.

Lesson 4, Section 1

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 4, you should be able to:

- A. Understand God's perspective of eternal security and support it with Scripture.
- B. Personalize Romans 8:29.

Scripture

Read Romans 8:29-30

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Lesson 4

In the previous lesson of this course, we saw three biblical reasons why we can put full confidence in our eternal security in Christ Jesus. Now, I would like to follow that with four more reasons for our hope.

First, one of the greatest reasons to be confident in our eternal security is because of **the eternal purpose of God**. Romans 8:29-30 provides a wonderful summary of God's purpose for man. Many of these concepts—such as being justified, glorified, and conformed to the image of Christ—are covered in great detail in other *Faith Foundations* courses.

All of the concepts listed in this passage are links in a divine chain that God has welded together. Each one fits and works together to secure what God has already accomplished. What are these links?

1. *God foreknew us.* He knew us before the Creation of the world. There has never been a time when our all-knowing God did not know us intimately.
2. *God called us.* Through His precious Word, He called us unto Himself. Every single believer is a person who, in the power of the Holy Spirit, has responded to God's call by receiving Jesus as Lord.
3. *God justified us.* We have seen this over and over again. This means that God has declared us "not guilty" of our sin—not on the basis of our own works, but because our sin debt has been paid in full by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
4. *God glorified us.* We've seen in previous lessons that it is often difficult to understand this important point. If you are confused, I invite you to go back in your transcript to re-examine the lesson entitled, *You Have Been Glorified*. For now, we can simply say that our glorification is the result of our faith in Christ, because our eternal futures were secured in victory by Jesus' atoning death on the cross. When we came under that salvation through Christ, we also shared in that victory.

In this chain, it is important to see that nowhere in the Bible does it discuss our being able to break that chain or undo the eternal purpose of God. Once we are in Christ, we can never become un-glorified, un-justified, or un-called.

J1: Meditate on Romans 8:29. In your own words, write a definition of each one of the five aspects (being foreknown, conformed, called, justified, and glorified) of Romans 8:29-30, and make it personal by including words like "I" and "me." Here's an example: "Romans 8:29 promises that God has known me even before I knew Him, before I was ever born."

The second reason we can be assured of our eternal security is **the very terminology that is used in Scripture to describe our relationship with God**. One example of this is that the Bible says we have been *born again*. (John 3:3-5) Why do you think Jesus used that phrase to describe our condition? It is because it perfectly represents what has happened. In Christ, we are completely new people. As 2 Corinthians 5:17 describes, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come."

Also, Romans 8:16-17 describes us as "children of God" and "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ." Now, why would the Bible use terms

like “born again,” “new creation,” or “heirs of God” except to indicate a complete change in a sinful man? In Christ, there is a brand new life, brand new spirit, brand new future, and a brand new destination. Nowhere in Scripture is there any hint of losing this designation for any reason. We cannot become “un-born again” or “un-adopted” by God. Just like the father of the Prodigal Son, God never stops loving us and, when we stray, He never stops looking forward to our return. (Luke 15:11-32)

Q1: Answer this question based on the video “Saved and Lost Again.”

True or False? The story of the Prodigal Son does not depict God as running, which would signify His deep care and longing for His children.

Lesson 4, Section 2

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 4, you should be able to:

- A. Understand the scriptural basis for eternal security.
- B. Evaluate the effects of eternal security on daily living.

The third reason for our assurance of eternal security is **the seal of the Holy Spirit**. This is made abundantly clear in Ephesians 1:11-14. Take time now to read that entire passage.

Now, what I really want to focus on here is found in verses 13 and 14, “you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession.” So, how are we sealed? By the Holy Spirit. How long are we sealed? Until the day of redemption. Let’s explore this a bit more.

One reason why a seal was used in biblical times was to **authenticate something as genuine**. In those days, an individual would put his stamp on something to show that it belonged to him. God’s seal, however, is not a stamp or a mark, but the very presence of the Holy Spirit Himself. We are sealed by God because we have the Holy Spirit living within us. This shows that we not only belong to the Father, but that He has also expressed how valuable we are to Him. (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 6:19)

Q2: The seal of the Holy Spirit can be described with the following object analogy. (Choose the BEST answer.)

- L. An airtight plastic bag.*
- M. Glue.*

- N. *Duct tape.*
- O. *A paper bag.*
- P. *A certificate of residency.*
- Q. *An official, notarized birth certificate.*

Another value to our understanding of this seal is the **security** it implies. Ephesians 4:30 clearly states that we will be sealed until the day of redemption. That means that nothing can break that seal of security until Jesus comes back. At that time, all of us who have been sealed in the Spirit will be finally, eternally united with Christ in glory. So you see, once you receive Jesus as Savior and God places His seal upon you, no one and nothing can break that until Jesus Himself comes to call us out of this fallen world.

Finally, the idea of God's seal of the Holy Spirit is trustworthy because it **shows that God has made a pledge to us**. This idea is much like putting down earnest money for a house, in which a buyer lays out a set amount of money to prove his intention to follow through with the purchase. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is a declaration of God's intention to fulfill exactly what He promised.

The fourth reason we can have confidence in eternal security is because of the **unending faithfulness of God**. Let's look at a passage that is often used to argue *against* eternal security, 2 Timothy 2:11-13. This is a controversial passage, but I want to show you how many people misinterpret it and therefore miss what the true message is.

Many people get sidetracked by the section that reads, "if we deny Him, He also will deny us." This focus misses the point of the passage, which is the faithfulness of God. This section cannot be separated from its larger context; in context, this follows the wonderful word of hope, "If we endure, we will also reign with Him." So, the idea being presented is that if we hold tight to Christ, we will be rewarded in heaven. However, if we stray from the Lord after making a decision to receive Him, we will not receive a full portion of that eternal reward. Does that mean that we have lost our salvation? No! It just means that we will be denied some of the privileges and position that could have otherwise been ours.

Now, someone may argue that denying Christ is the ultimate sin and cannot be forgiven. Well, if that is true, how would you explain Peter? On the night of Jesus' death, Peter vehemently denied knowing Jesus, even using a curse to stress his point. (Luke 22:54-62) Some time later, following the resurrection, what was Jesus' response to his remorseful friend? Jesus gave Peter the opportunity to express his sadness and

remorse for the denial, and He restored Peter with a wondrous purpose: to follow Christ. (John 21:15-19). Truly, Jesus never once gave up on Peter, even though Peter thought he had destroyed their relationship.

J2: Defend this statement as if you were writing an essay for a class: Peter represents the ordinary Christian who is sealed with the extraordinary Holy Spirit. Use Scripture to support your defense.

My friend, Jesus didn't cast Peter out when he doubted and outright denied Him. And I want to tell you that He will not cast you out, either. If you have been saved by His grace, then you are sealed and secure in Christ, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father.

Prayer

Father, we thank You and praise You. We love You and adore You for providing for us what we could never deserve for ourselves. And to think that You are so forgiving and loving and kind and understanding that while You often have to discipline us for our disobedience and while You have to stand by grieved in Your heart while we waste away periods of time in our life, squander those gifts and those talents and abilities that You've given, and live disobediently before You and suffer the consequences of it—thank You that You do not, under any condition, ever cast us out and disown us from the family.

We love You. We praise You. And Father, I pray for those who have never been saved—that they'll understand that there is only one way and one hope. It's wrapped up in a person, Jesus Christ. And if they are willing to confess their sins, acknowledge that—their need of You and place their trust in You for the forgiveness of their sins in that moment their sins will be forgiven; You, Lord Jesus will become their Savior; You, Holy Spirit will seal them unto the day of redemption and forever they'll become one of Your children.

Thank You for the simple, profound, wonderful, eternal promises which You've given to us through Your precious Word is our prayer. Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

1 John 5:13

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

J3: *After reading about Peter, the Prodigal Son, and the seal of God's Holy Spirit, what have you learned in this lesson that changes the way you view eternal security? Ask God for insight, and then record how that transformation of thought will affect your daily approach to life.*

Audio/Video Teaching Clip *Saved and Lost Again?*

Many times, I have heard people say, “You can be saved and then lost again.” Oftentimes, they may point at someone and say, “I know that person was saved, no doubt about it. He went to church, was baptized, taught a Sunday School class, and sang in the choir. He was there every Sunday, but now he is just living in sin and says he doesn’t even believe the Bible anymore. He used to be saved, but now he has fallen from grace.”

Let me tell you that all those things this person did in church did not make him saved or unsaved. There’s not a single thing we can do to make ourselves any more or less saved. We are only saved when we place our trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sin based on what Christ did at Calvary.

Now, it is true that many people make genuine decisions for Christ and then later fall into a lifestyle that doesn’t reflect Him. Does this mean they are no longer saved?

The best illustration of this issue is in the fifteenth chapter of Luke, the story of the Prodigal Son who willfully and deliberately walked away from his family. He chose to live a life of sin, disobedience, and rebellion. He no longer acted like his father’s son.

Let me ask you, how is this scene any different from what Christians do when they turn away from God and live a sinful lifestyle for a season? It isn’t any different at all. That’s why Jesus told this story, because He wanted us to see the father’s reaction. It is so wonderful, so powerful, that there isn’t anything like it in all of Scripture.

When the son comes home, fearing what his father might do, what happened? His father runs toward his son so fast that nothing could stop him. He throws his arms around his child and says, “My son was lost from my presence, lost from my fellowship. He was lost, but now he’s found.”

When Jesus told this story, who do you think the father figure represented? It was God the Father. And this is the only passage in the whole Bible that pictures God as running. He ran because He never stopped loving, never stopped caring, and never stopped waiting for his wayward child to come home.

And so, when we think about eternal security, this is how we should view God. Even though we may go away from Him for a while, He doesn’t stop loving us and He won’t turn us away. Now, listen carefully. This does not mean that our conduct is not important, nor that there are no

consequences for our sin. There are consequences of sin, always. Sometimes they are feelings of guilt and sometimes very specific loss. For a time, we may stop acting like the brand new person God has made us. But regardless of how we act, when we trusted Jesus Christ as our Savior, we were declared sons and daughters of our loving, gracious heavenly Father. For how long? For all eternity.

Life Principles Center

Course: Your Eternal Security

T2_CD_L5: Those Solemn Warnings (MI020)

Introduction: This lesson is divided into two sections to help you complete the entire lesson at your convenience. In order to renew your mind with God's Word and give you an accurate view of Him, it's very important that you take time to complete each assignment before moving on to the next lesson.

Lesson 5, Section 1

Objectives: *At the end of this section of Lesson 5, you should be able to:*

- A. Learn how to recognize common scriptural misconceptions about eternal security.
- B. Relate Galatians 5:1 to your life.

Scripture

Read Galatians 5:1-5

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

Lesson 5

After studying all the passages we have seen over the past several lessons, you may be wondering how on earth someone can believe that it is possible to lose your salvation. But, to be fair, there are many passages of Scripture that, when taken out of context, appear to be teaching just that. What I want to do is examine the major passages that are often used to argue *against* the issue of eternal security. The three most difficult passages are all found in the book of Hebrews, and these are the three that we will study in this lesson.

J1: Before we dive into the book of Hebrews, meditate on Galatians 5:1, and explain its significance in your life right now—with your current

struggles. Now, how do you think it relates to the issue of eternal security? Record your insights in your journal.

The first passage we will study is Hebrews 2:1-4. Here, the author of Hebrews is speaking to Jewish Christians who were feeling outside pressure to resume their old ways of relying on the Jewish Law for their salvation. So, he is encouraging them to “pay much closer attention to what [they had] heard, so that [they] do not drift away from it.”

The difficult part of this passage is the first part of verse 3, which reads, “how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” Many people read this as evidence that our salvation can be neglected and lost. However, the first thing I want you to notice here is that the author only asks the question, “What if?” He does not answer that question; there is no indication that a believer’s neglect can result in losing his salvation.

Simply put, the author is asking a hypothetical question. He is in effect asking, “If we don’t think that Jesus’ sacrifice is what saves us, then where else can we find salvation? How can we escape God’s wrath if not through Christ?” The answer, of course, is that we cannot. The message to this specific audience of Jewish Christians is that the works of the Law cannot save; only the blood of Jesus can wipe away sin and restore our relationship with God.

Q1: True or False? In order to identify whether Scripture is used accurately in support of a particular belief, one must examine its context, its speaker, its wording, and its audience.

The second passage we need to see is Hebrews 6:4-6. Now, let’s be honest: if you believe that it is possible to lose your salvation, then this is a horribly frightening passage. I remember a time in my life when these verses scared me to death. In verses four and five, the author raises the issue of what happens to people who have received the saving message of Jesus and then fall away. Then in verse six, we see the striking message that those who fall away cannot be renewed to repentance.

Well, at first glance, this certainly seems to speak against eternal security. However, we cannot pull this verse out of Scripture all by itself. We can only look at it through the lens of the whole Word of God. For example, let’s look at this passage in light of the story of the Prodigal Son, which we discussed in the previous lesson. That was a young man who completely removed himself from his family and wasted his life on sinful living. When he finally returned home, his father didn’t reject or

refuse him, but ran to meet him and threw his arms around him. This is a picture of God running to meet us, even after we have turned away from Him.

If this parable—from the mouth of Jesus Himself—shows that God runs to throw His arms around us after a time of falling away, how then can we say that we can lose that salvation? Once you are a child of God, you are always a child of God. We cannot become un-adopted.

Q2: *True or False? The context in which each Scripture verse needs to be read is a context that includes the chapter, book, time period and/or circumstances in which it was recorded. That context also assumes that the Bible as a whole is used as a larger landscape against which one should view particular verses.*

I believe Hebrews 6:6 means that if we say with our actions that Jesus is not sufficient for salvation (and we do that by trying to earn our salvation by other means), we leave ourselves in a precarious position. Adding anything to Christ's work implies that it was insufficient; therefore, doing so proclaims Jesus' atoning death as weak. If we come to faith in the great salvation that Christ provides and then walk away, there is no outside force that can bring us back. Instead, the change must come from within, as the indwelling Holy Spirit, who never leaves, continues to change the life of every believer.

As we see throughout *Faith Foundations*, believers are redeemed only by the shed blood of Christ. When we receive Jesus as Lord, we experience the blessing and security of that redemption. However, when we walk away from that saving knowledge, we do not lose our redemption, only the security that comes from our faith in it. So, we cannot be redeemed a second time, because we never *stopped* being redeemed.

Q3: *True or False? In the same way that sin affects our sensitivity to believe lies from the enemy, our choice to walk away from Jesus wreaks havoc on our confidence in a lasting salvation.*

Lesson 5, Section 2

Objectives: *At the end of this section of Lesson 5, you should be able to:*

- A. Review what you have learned in previous *Faith Foundations* coursework.

B. Understand the difference between the truth of being disciplined and fallacy of having lost your salvation.

The third passage that we will examine is Hebrews 10:23-31. Clearly, this is a difficult passage and it is easy to infer that it refers to a believer losing his salvation. However, I want you to know that this interpretation misses the whole point of the passage.

In verse 26, the author asserts that there is no further sacrifice for believers who continue to walk in a deliberately sinful lifestyle after receiving the salvation of Christ. Many people read this and think, “Well, there it is. If you keep on sinning after receiving Jesus, then you can lose your salvation.” My friend, that is not what this is saying at all.

I want you to look back at a few verses: Hebrews 10:10, 12, 14, and 18. Do you see a recurring theme in these verses? Over and over again, we see that there has been one single sacrifice for all sin, and that sacrifice is whole and complete. There is no reason to add anything to it, because once Jesus died, no more sacrifices were needed. (1 John 2:1-2)

So, this chapter was a warning to Jewish Christians who kept on in their sinful lifestyles. The author of Hebrews says to them, “There is only one sacrifice and He has already come. There are no more sacrifices. Don’t think that you can accept this word and then keep on doing what you are doing. Nothing will come along later to be a better sacrifice, so you better align your life with the truth you already know.”

The result of not abiding by this warning is the strict discipline of God. Never let it be said that eternal security is a free pass to keep on with a life of sin! The fact that we don’t have to worry about losing our salvation does not mean that we will not be disciplined by our heavenly Father when we go astray. Hebrews 12:5-6 cautions us, “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord . . . for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.”

This is powerful language. “Scourging” implies a severe act of discipline when necessary, not out of revenge or punishment, but in an effort to change the ways of a believer continuing in sinful living. **So, yes we will be disciplined when necessary, but our salvation is never at stake.** Who is it that God disciplines? Hebrews 12:6 reminds us that He disciplines those He loves and every single son that He receives. If God receives us, then we can’t be lost, even when we must be disciplined by His hand.

There are many passages that people use to refute the truth of eternal security, and I wish we had time to explore them all. However,

these three arguments from the book of Hebrews stand as the most difficult to interpret, and I hope you have a better grasp of these important passages. For an overview of the other passages often used to argue against eternal security, I encourage you to study the sermon I preached on this topic. You'll find it in our online bookstore under the title *Those Solemn Warnings* in the sermon series, *Eternal Security—Can You Be Sure?*, sermon number MIO20.

Prayer

Father God, when we think about this great salvation that You have provided through your Son Jesus Christ, and that You have given this gift to us free of charge through no work of our own, we realize how inadequate we are to thank You. You knew our deepest need, and You met that need at a great sacrifice. Thank You for that, and thank You for the security we have in knowing that no one or nothing can away take that saving gift You gave us through Christ Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

1 John 5:13

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Choose one of the aforementioned passages in Hebrews to consider over the next day or two. Then, return to your journal and identify the truths God reveals to you. They may or may not relate to eternal security.

Life Principles Center

Term 2: Knowing What You Believe

Course D: Your Eternal Security

Lesson 6: What Do We Have to Lose? (MI090)

Introduction: Second Timothy 2:15 says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." For that reason, we encourage you to complete each assignment before progressing to the next lesson. This lesson is structured with two separate sections to help you maximize your study time.

Lesson 6, Section 1

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 6, you should be able to:

A. Evaluate the significance of your motives and deeds.

B. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 3:12-13, using it as a means of examining your own life.

Scripture

Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Lesson 6

Having spent the last five lessons of this course examining the matter of eternal security, I would like to finish up this study by asking a very important question: *If we know for certain that we are eternally secure and will be with Jesus forever, does our behavior here on earth really make any difference at all?*

I have heard this question from many skeptics, as well as genuine believers. Essentially, their charge is that if God has already sealed and

secured us, then that must mean that our behavior does not have any eternal consequences. My friend, this could not be more incorrect. God is very concerned with our behavior, and Scripture teaches that we still have a great deal to lose even after we're saved.

Carefully read today's Scripture passage, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. There are three vital messages in this passage that deal directly with our eternal security. The **first** thing I want you to notice is that **we will have to give an account of our lives to the Lord**. Throughout this text, we see the personal aspect through the use of "each man" and "any man." This is a truth presented over and over in Scripture.

J1: Read the following Scripture passages and note the emphasis given on each individual's responsibility: 1 Corinthians 4:5, Romans 14:10, 12, 2 Corinthians 5:10.

This lesson's passage, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, also emphasizes *what* will be judged. In these five verses, the apostle Paul mentions the believer's "work" four times. And what will the Lord do to each man's work? Paul uses four different words here to express the same idea: the *revelation* of each one's work. Without a doubt, God's Word is stressing a vital point in these few verses, and that is that everything in your life and my life is going to be revealed and evaluated.

Furthermore, we will receive our reward based on that evaluation. Verse 14 states, "If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward." Earlier, in verse 12, Paul describes our work in rather odd concepts: gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw.

J2: Take a few minutes to study this passage before continuing on, specifically concentrating on 1 Corinthians 3:12-13. What do the comparisons between gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw mean?

Remember, the issue here is that our deeds will be examined by fire. Wood, hay, and straw are all combustible material; they completely burn up in a fire. So, Paul is saying that if our deeds are empty, meaningless, or done with the wrong motive, then they are like wood, hay, or straw. When these works are revealed in the Lord's refining fire, they will turn to ash.

However, if our deeds are valuable, Christ-centered, and done in humble service, these things are like gold, silver, and fine stones. They will survive in the testing fire.

Imagine this: you are standing before the Lord while He reveals your every action. Everything you've ever done is passed through His righteous flame. On one side you see a growing pile of ashes. This represents the actions in your life that could not withstand the flame; these are your combustible deeds. On the other side you see a pile of gold, silver, and precious stones. These are the things in your life that were done in the right spirit, things that brought glory and honor to God. Now, which pile do you think would grow higher, the worthless ashes or the meaningful treasure?

J3: Evaluate your own deeds and the motives behind them. What ways have you invested yourself in humble service, with pure motives, and in what ways have you devoted yourself to meaningless pursuits or to good things, but with an impure motive?

Lesson 6, Section 2

Objectives: At the end of this section of Lesson 6, you should be able to:

- A. Understand varying rewards in heaven.
- B. Provide a concise defense of eternal security to those who doubt its truth.

Well, what does this have to do with our reward in heaven? My friend, you need to understand something: **not everyone who goes to heaven will receive the same reward.** Even though you may be eternally secure in Christ and go to heaven to be with Him for eternity, you still have much to lose based on your behavior in this life.

There are three areas of reward that we must examine. First is our **position**. Not everyone will have the same position in heaven. The Bible speaks of different crowns in heaven: the crown of righteousness, the crown of life, the crown of glory, and so forth. These are all crowns that will be given by God and they indicate something special among each *individual* believer.

A second reward in heaven will be that of **privileges**. It is not enough to simply get in "by the skin of your teeth." Rather, Scripture teaches that some will reign with him while others will not. (Matthew 19:28-30)

A third reward in heaven will be our capacity to enjoy the **pleasure** of heaven. It is possible for two people to witness the same thing and yet experience it in different ways. For example, a life-long music lover would enjoy an orchestra masterpiece much more than a casual listener.

Although they hear the same sounds, one experiences the joy of the music much more than the other. In some way, that is what our experience of heaven will be like. Some will be better able to embrace the unimaginable joy of heaven much more powerfully than others.

Q1: True or False? Our rewards in heaven include our position, our power, and our prestige.

It is so foolish to live disobediently. When you live outside of the will of God, all you are doing is cheating yourself day by day of the blessings that God has in store for you. God rewards every single act of obedience, while our disobedient deeds burn away leaving nothing but ash. Why on earth would we choose charred ash over the precious treasure that God desires to give us?

J4: Knowing about the varying rewards in heaven, try to think of at least two reasons why you might choose "ash" over "treasure" by your daily actions or motives.

Now, while Scripture says we will be judged, it is important to note that we will not be judged in comparison to other people. We will each be accountable only for what we have done in our lives based on the gifts and opportunities we have been given. For example, a godly housewife will not be "worse off" than a veteran pastor, because each will be accountable for what they have done within the scope of their own lives.

My heart breaks every time I hear someone say, "My works and behavior don't matter because I know I'll go to heaven anyway." Friend, if you say that, then you are essentially telling Jesus that you don't care anything about Him, anything about what He did, or anything about His sacrifice. It shows that your only motivation in coming to Christ was to avoid hell. Would you ever want to look Jesus in His thorn-scarred face and tell Him this? Well, you may not be proclaiming this message with your mouth, but your actions very well could be.

Now here's what I want you to remember. Loss of reward does not start when you get to heaven. It's been going on all of your life since the moment you accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. When you and I disobey God, we lose. Every day, when we exercise wrong motives, wrong conduct, and lack of service, we just keep on losing. Losing our reward starts down here with the blessings that we could be enjoying right now.

But, even though we may lose some of our reward, Scripture assures us that we will not lose our salvation. Today's focal passage ends with this word of hope, "If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved" (1 Cor. 3:15). Even if we have no good works to offer, even if the refining fire reduces all of our life's work to mere ashes, God will not revoke our salvation. We will still be with Him in glory, even though we won't experience it as fully and as wonderfully as we might have otherwise. And my friend, this glorious salvation that God has eternally secured in our lives is certainly the best motivation we could have to live a life committed to the work and service of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Father, what kind of awesome, awful, despairing condition we would be in were it not for Your grace and Your loving kindness and Your tender mercy toward us. I pray in Jesus' name that every single person who is listening to this message may be honest enough to evaluate his and her life and ask themselves this question, "Which pile is growing the highest, the fastest? The ashes or the reward?" And grant them, oh God, the courage to repent of those wrong motives, is obedient conduct, and lack of service to You and begin today in order that the pile of rewards may so far surpass the ashes.

I pray Father for somebody who needs to be saved that they might recognize there is no escape from judgment and that all the hard times we have now are just Your ways of warning us, "Better get right."

I pray Father for those who ought to be baptized, who have been saved but have refused to be obedient to You. Would You help them to understand they are losing every day?

And Lord, teach us how to look at You as You really are, our heavenly Father? Yes. But life is serious. One of these days we're going to have to give an account. You are gracious and kind and loving and forgiving to us beyond our comprehension but You've warned us that Your judgment is inevitable. Oh God, we know we can't shovel the ash away but we can, by repentance of our sin and a fresh new commitment to You, work on the other pile until the ashes are hard to see for the reward. And this we ask in Jesus' name, amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory Review

Fill in the blanks to complete this course's memory verse.

I _____ these things to _____ who _____ in the
_____ of the _____ of _____, so that you may
_____ that _____ have _____.
1 John _____ : _____

J5: Take some time to review all six lessons in this course and the Scriptures referenced therein. Then, in your journal, write out a concise defense of eternal security that you could use in your discussions with friends and family members. How might you lovingly and patiently express the truth of eternal security to those who refute it? How can you best share this good news with unbelievers?

Conclusion

I know from experience that until you settle once and for all the question of whether or not you are eternally secure, joy will elude you. You will not be able to experience the fullness of the Christian life, because you will constantly be afraid of losing your salvation. If you have struggled with this issue, I pray that this course has provided the tools you need to settle this matter once and for all. Our Father wants you to know that He has you firmly in His hand. Even though our actions are not always pleasing to God, we can never lose His unfailing love and devotion.