ETERNAL SECURITY & THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSEVERANCE (PART 2)

In *part 1* of Eternal Security & Perseverance we learned that:

4. Nothing can separate you from the love of your new Father, in Christ Jesus!

1. Your relationship with God is now a father-son/daughter relationship by spiritual re-birth. Review *John 1:12-13.*

**12Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God— 13children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. - John 1:12-13**

B. When you were born physically, someone wrote down a record of your birth: your birth certificate.

When God gave you eternal life and were re-born, and a record was made too. *1 John 5:11-13.*

**11And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13I 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. – 1 John 5:11-13**

C. Your birth certificate was marked with a seal. Your spiritual birth is sealed by the Holy Spirit of God. *Ephesians 1:13; 4:30.*

**13In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit – Ephesians 1:13**

**30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. – Ephesians 4:30**

1. Once you are reborn, you cannot be un-reborn. You will be your father’s child for eternity because He has sealed the deal – with His Holy Spirit!

5. Basic questions.

1. What about people who fall away from the faith?

The bible warns us of this often. Actually, most people who began to follow Jesus during His earthly life, did eventually fall away. But that’s because they were never truly saved to start with. Their motives for following Jesus were centered around their own expectations and not on who Jesus really is or what He teachers. When they eventually discovered the true Jesus, they didn’t want Him.

Remember, only God brings Salvation, not human effort. We can only ‘understand’ the truth of the gospel (our deep-rooted sinfulness and God’s amazing grace) by the Holy Spirit’s enabling. Even today, many people begin to follow Jesus because they want what He isn’t actually offering. It isn’t really Jesus they’re after, but rather certain *perceived benefits*. We all want Heaven or God’s blessing on our marriage, on our relationships, work, or financial or physical security or we want someone to fix our problems. Although God can and does help us with these things, He often doesn’t do it the way we expected or even the way we want Him to.

But, Jesus’ call to follow Him, is one of repentance! A change, a life transformation!

In fact, and most importantly, as we saw in the previous lesson on Baptism. Christ’s call is for us to die to our old self and be raised to a new life in Him! The fact that many people fall away, is evidence that they never truly died. Don’t be one of them!

**63The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. 64Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.”**

**66From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.**

**67“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.**

**68Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” – John 6:63-69**

True believers believe and stick with Christ because the Spirit alone has given them eternal life! Others will fall away.

Jesus explains this phenomenon of ‘falling away’ when he explains the meaning of the *Parable of the soils*, in **Matthew 13:18-23**. (We’ll let you read this one yourself. Read the whole passage carefully: **Matthew 13:1-23**)

(Notice the word: “**Understand**” is only used of the *good soil* who *perseveres* and *bears fruit. With the first soil Jesus clearly says it “does not understand.” The next two soils “seem to understand” although nothing is said about understanding. We’re left to assume and even hope that there is understanding, but eventually they fall away, so it becomes clear that there is no ‘true understanding.’ Yet finally, with the good soil, Jesus says, they* ***“understand”*** *– that seed grows, it endures and it produces much fruit!*

*We are left with no other conclusion but understand that it is only the seed in “Good soil” that was truly ‘rooted in Christ’ – the other seeds were not.*

**So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. – Colossians 2:6-7**

*See also 1 John 2:18-23*

**18Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 19They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.**

**20But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. 23No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. – 1 John 2:18-23**

Christ Jesus the Holy One has *‘anointed’* us (given us) the Holy Spirit. As mentioned earlier the Holy Spirit enables us to believe (John 3:7) and seals us for Salvation (Ephesians 1:13), but He also leads you into all truth (John 16:13) – we have a built in ‘lie detector.’ No true believer can deny the truth!

1. How can I know for sure that I am saved?

The Bible says that we will face many hardships in life, but we need to endure! Endurance is a good tester of true faith, especially in times of persecution or great difficulty.

**…the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. – Matthew 24:12-13**

**Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. – James 1:12**

The bible uses many other phrases like: ‘press on,’ ‘fight the good fight,’ ‘kept the faith,’ ‘run the race with endurance’ etc. to encourage believers to persevere in trials, because at times you will feel like giving up.

As for you…Don’t give up!

The good news is that we can trust that God always finishes what ***‘He starts***.’ If God’s Holy Spirit has initiated faith in you, He promises that He will carry you through the process of purification and maturity, causing you to endure all the way to the finish line.

**6being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. – Philippians 1:6**

It is God who *Justifies* (saves us right now); God who *Sanctifies* (makes us Holy throughout our lives); and it is God who G*lorifies* (will make us like Jesus one day when we get to Heaven) – trust Him!

C. What if I don’t feel saved?

1. Not feeling the part is often a normal part of life*.* We can’t allow our mood to dictate what is true or not. Yet, after we sin carelessly or especially when we sin intentionally, we can later feel so guilty that we even doubt that we are actually saved. But, remember what we learned in lesson one. Although we have been given God’s nature by the Holy Spirit (a new desire to honor God). As long as we live in our body, we will always have our old ‘Adam nature’ that absolutely loves sin.

Although we don’t yet have Christ’s *perfection*…let us press on in that *direction!*

Therefore, when you don’t feel saved or when you sin, keep repenting and keep trusting and thanking God for his grace and forgiveness. And press on in your Bible study and prayer and worship and obedience, don’t give up! Trust God that through all your trials and temptations, that He is moulding you into the image of Christ…slowly but surely.

For some of us it may seem to take more work than others!