

What Does the Bible
REALLY SAY

About

***SALVATION,
ETERNAL LIFE,
ETERNAL SECURITY?***

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Salvation, Eternal Life, Eternal Security

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Dedication

*This book is dedicated to God Almighty; and to all Pastors
across the world that are faithfully studying and teaching
their congregation the word of God.*

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Introduction

Understanding is one commodity, quality or ingredient that is very vital for the success of any venture or enterprise. No relationship can thrive without it. Receiving anything from God would be impossible without it; and our entire Christian experience would be nothing to write home about without it. Understanding is such an important factor to life. The book of Proverbs says:

“Understanding is a fountain of life to one who has it...” Proverbs 16:22a.

A fountain or spring is usually a source or beginning point of a river or stream. Literally, the passage above implies that understanding is the beginning of life. Until one possesses understanding, therefore, one would be living in frustration, struggles and accepting lies, misinformation and half-truths as truth.

Nowhere else is the Christian prone to misinformation and half-truths than the subjects of salvation, eternal life and eternal security. Lack of understanding of what the Bible really says about these basic, yet related doctrines has kept so many Christians from living to their full Christian potentials and becoming all that God intends for them to be. Worst still, is the fact that so many of our Pastors and Teachers don't understand these doctrines themselves; and so we have a situation where it seems like the blind is leading the blind. This is not God's intention for His church.

This book is devoted to explaining three basic yet related doctrines in the word of God. They are basics, which need to be understood and believed since without that certain advanced

truths or doctrines can neither be understood nor properly applied.

1 - Salvation

Although the word salvation appears very frequently in the Bible, very few Christians really understand what it generally means and the other connotations that the word carries. Salvation may mean different things in different contexts in the Bible, but the correct and basic synonyms for the word include deliverance, rescue, and preservation. Everywhere the word is used in the Bible, whether as the verb “save” or the noun “salvation”, it carries the thought or idea of deliverance. The important question that must follow is deliverance from what?

Once a Christian is able to ask such a question each time he comes across the word in the Bible then he or she can, through reasoning from the context, identify which kind of deliverance or salvation is being referred to?

A man can be saved from the following:

- a. From spiritual death to spiritual life.
- b. From false beliefs, teachings, traditions and philosophies of men.
- c. From the temptation of sin nature.
- d. From a physical sickness or restored to good health
- e. From entering into some sort of danger, like accident (whether the accident occurred or was about to occur); from robbery attack (whether you were robbed but your life was spared or you were not robbed at all). Like I said earlier, in any situation where there is some sort of deliverance, preservation or rescue, we have to understand that salvation has taken place.

In this chapter, I am going to limit myself to the salvation of a person’s soul. Since every person needs soul deliverance, it is

important we understand what happened to mankind and why it has become necessary that every person gets saved.

When God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the garden, He created them perfect and innocent. This means that they were without guilt. There was no problem with their soul and body. Therefore, Adam and Eve didn't need any soul deliverance. I use the word "soul" to refer to the immaterial part of man. This refers to the part which is being housed by the physical body. God's salvation for humanity is not only for the soul (the immaterial part of a man); but also for the physical body. However, the salvation/deliverance of the physical body is reserved for the future coming of our Lord Jesus Christ at the rapture of the church. This means that it is only those who have already received soul deliverance from spiritual death on this earth will receive the physical deliverance from the sinful body in future.

In Genesis chapter 2, God gave Adam and his wife an instruction (call it a warning or prohibition) against what they should and should not eat. This was a test for them. The purpose of this test was for them to choose God and His word over everything else. Remember that Adam and Eve were not created as robots. They were created with freewill and the power of choice. They were told to choose what was good. You say, what was good? God's instruction to stay away from the prohibited fruit was good. But they exercised their God given freewill against their Creator and chose the creature's advice (i.e., Satan). The freewill given to them was necessary since without it God's word wouldn't make sense. This is because creating man in His image without anything for man to choose for or against is meaningless and inconsistent with the verse below:

“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” Genesis 1:27.

Remember, man is in the image of God, and since God has the ability to choose and exercise his freewill; He made His image to have the same ability. Choice can only be exercised between two or more things. The verses below show us the choices God set before man. He goes ahead, in his goodness, to warn man against making the wrong choice. The choice, however, lies with man concerning what God wants or what God is against.

“Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. ¹⁶The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;¹⁷but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die” Genesis 2:15-17.

Adam and his wife decided to choose against God’s will for their lives and the reward of their negative choice is spiritual death as recorded in Genesis chapter 3. Therefore, spiritual death was a consequence or judgment attached to God’s warning to Adam and Eve. How do we know it was spiritual death and not physical death since it is not explicitly designated “spiritual death” in the verses? Through proper reasoning we know from the context that spiritual death is implied because Adam and Eve did not drop dead the very moment, second, minute, day or even a week that they ate the fruit. Therefore, it could not be physical death but rather spiritual death since God explicitly declared that they would die the very same day they ate the fruit.

Death literally means “separation”. Therefore, spiritual death means Adam was separated from God in terms of relationship. Except God had provided a means of restoration, Adam was going to remain separated or dead forever. Not only that, they were also going to find themselves in the lake of fire after they had died physically. Physical death was only a consequential result of spiritual death. If Adam and Eve had not eaten the fruit, they would still be living on the earth today. This spiritual death was then passed on to Adam’s posterity at physical birth. Every human being, except the Man Jesus Christ is born spiritually dead. The human race is born spiritually dead because everyone was born a sinner. This explains why babies die physically. Babies are born sinners and spiritually dead. They do not develop consciousness and sin to become sinners. Adam’s disobedience condemned humanity to captivity in the Satanic Kingdom. Two kingdoms have existed since the fall of man. Though Satan existed before the fall of Adam, he didn’t have any authority over man until man chose to serve Satan instead of God. Since then, the human race is designated children of the devil (John 8:44), sons of disobedience (Colossians 3:6); until one is born again by God to become a child of God (Galatians 3:26, John 1:12). So the whole issue of eternal salvation or soul salvation is for a person to be saved from spiritual death and become a child of God.

God’s Provision for Salvation

Since a man cannot come to God by his own standard, there must be an acceptable standard set up by God through which man can come to Him. The result of the provision for salvation has remained the same, but the revelation of the provision has been different in relation to the Devine dispensations (Hebrews 1:1-2). In Genesis 3 we read of man’s first effort to return to or be made acceptable to God:

“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings” Genesis 3:7.

God didn't ask them to cover themselves with fig leaves. They knew they needed a covering and thought God would like or approve of their works, efforts or use of fig leaves as covering. Later revelation shows that God rejected their effort and this has been the struggle of mankind from the beginning. Man is naturally bent to works and thinks that there are specific good things (works) that he can do in order to make it to heaven or be accepted by God. Though God rejected their hard work of fig leaves, He still wanted them reconciled to Himself, because of His love for them and His unwillingness to see them end up in the lake of fire after they had died physically (2 Peter 3:9). Therefore, God Himself provided for them a covering, which was different from their own.

“The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them” Genesis 3:21.

Notice that it was God who made the provision of covering (garments). This implies that their works were rejected. The fact that Adam and Eve accepted the clothing of animal skin implies that they believed in that sacrifice and were clothed with God's garment. This was how they got saved from spiritual death. Even though they got saved, they still possessed the sinful nature which they acquired at their first sin of eating the prohibited fruit. The sinful nature is passed to everyone at birth. So Adam was saved, delivered or rescued from spiritual death. Later revelations from God tell us that the sacrifices of animals were only a shadow pointing to the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Not only did God reject human works or effort to attain salvation with God in the Old Testament, He also

rejects human self *attained righteousness or works in the New Testament. In fact, the New Testament is filled with words or statements that clearly teach God's rejection of man's righteousness. Such negative expressions, both from the Old Testament and the New Testament include: not a righteous man, there is no one, no longer on the basis of works, not of yourselves, not as a result of works, not justified, not on the basis of deeds etc

1. ***Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.***
Ecclesiastes 7:20
2. ***They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.***
Psalm 14:3
3. ***Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.*** Galatians 2:16
4. ***Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH".*** Galatians 3:11
5. ***But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.*** Romans 11:6
6. ***For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*** Ephesians 2:8-9

7. *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our savior. Titus 3:5-6*

The question we should ask ourselves is: why is God so interested, and consistently telling man that he cannot be saved or justified by his human works or righteousness? God keeps emphasizing that in the scriptures because He knows that man is bent to human works. And because human righteousness cannot justify a person before God, the Bible has to assure man that his righteousness could not, cannot, and will not save him. Once this is made clear to man, he can humbly ask the question, then how can I be saved or justified before God?

How Do We Get Saved From Spiritual Death?

“How” is very important. It asks the question: ‘By what means?’ Countless evidences are given in the Bible as far as the means by which man can be accepted is concerned. Since God sees Jesus’ death on the cross as the perfect and only provision for salvation, by what means can the benefits of His death, burial, and resurrection come to mankind? The means is stated like this:

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” John 1:12-13.

In the verse above, we clearly see that the means of receiving Christ is expressed in terms of the word, **“believe”**. We become children of God not by the birth of human parents but by the birth of God Himself. When God gives birth to you, it is called

being born again. Remember that God doesn't have grandchildren. Having a Christian or believing parents doesn't make you a child of God. There is only one means by which a person can become a child of God, and that is by faith alone in Jesus Christ. One phrase that Jesus used to emphasize spiritual birth is the term, "born again". Please notice that the term "**born gain**" is not synonymous to the word "**believe**". Born again is a work that God alone does. We call it "**work**" because it involves an act just like a woman in labour exerts energy to push out her unborn baby from the womb. Even though the act involves a work, it is spiritual and cannot be seen. But the act is done by only God as man believes. God can only birth a person again (spiritual birth) when the person believes. The only part to be played by man is to believe. But always remember that "**believe**" is not a work. "**Believe**" or "**faith**" does not save; rather it is the object which one places his faith that saves.

"Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" John 3:3.

For a person to see the coming kingdom to be established by Jesus Christ on the earth for the one thousand years, one must be born by God Himself.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" John 3:6.

According to John 3:6, this birth is spiritual; not the act of a pregnant woman, but of God. Jesus explained that this birth is real but cannot be seen, heard or felt. Its reality is only known by believing the scripture. If you have always thought that doing something good (works) is what can make a person right with God, then you have not thought differently from the rest of mankind. All mankind is predisposed or inclined to works. It was part of the weaknesses that befell the human race. Adam

was the first person who thought that he could be saved by works. God said, NO! you can't be saved by any human means. Therefore, God provided the proper means. Unfortunately, this weakness of Adam's thought and action has affected all mankind. For this reason, every person who grows up to recognize the existence of God begins to think that God will accept him when he does good things. This is why the world has experienced all kinds of religion; and religion preaches one thing, "**WORKS**". There is nothing wrong with doing good works. Doing good works help society to live peaceably. For example, not stealing your brother's money is a good thing. Also, paying the hospital bill of a patient who doesn't have money to settle her bill is a good thing. But it is very wrong to think that you can be accepted into the presence of God because you did good works to those people. This is where religion has deceived many people.

"Therefore they said to Him, 'What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent'" John 6:28-29.

Man's religion has been nothing but exploring series of good works that they thought would make them commendable before God; the Jews were no exception. They wanted to find out what good work would constitute the work of God. Instead of asking from Jesus as to what God wants them to do, they ended up asking from the same position of weakness. They already had a preconception about what they thought (not what God thought) would constitute an acceptable work for God to save them. Like I said, the thought of human works is a common weakness that runs through the minds of all men. All unbelievers think that they can be saved by some sort of works (good behavior or practice). Those Jews weren't different from Adam, neither are they different from all religious people today. But just as God

straightened Adam and made him to know that his works couldn't save him, the same way, Christ straightened the minds of the Pharisees from their wrong ideology of human works. Jesus' answer indicates that there is only one work of God which He expects all men to do. How a person can do the work is explained in the context. And surprisingly, John 6:29 says they ought to believe in Christ. Now you ask, "But, is ***“believe”*** a work?" Well, to believe is not a work per se, but since men are always thinking in terms of what to do to be saved, God has to let them know that the only thing a man can do, and must do, is to believe in Christ since He was the only one sent by God from Heaven to save man. What's the point? The point is this: Adam had the same thought, or belief but it was rejected; the people in Christ' time, 2000 years ago also had the same thought as Adam, but such thought and actions were rejected by God. The bottom line is that, if any person living today is having the same thought of salvation by works, then that person should know that he is wasting his time. If God did not accept human standard of salvation by works in the past, it isn't today that He is going to compromise His integrity by changing His mind. This is the reason why God has been firm on His own standard, and not man's standard.

What Does The Phrase, “The Will Of God Mean?”

The phrase, **“the will of God”**, whether explicitly or implicitly stated means different things in different contexts in the bible. God has always had a will for mankind.

- It was the will of God for Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17)
- It was the will of God for the Jews to do His commandments (Deuteronomy 28)
- It was the will of God for the Jews to accept their Messiah, Jesus Christ; but they were not willing (John 5:39-40)

- It is the will of God that Christians abstain from sexual immorality (1Thessalonians 4:3)
- It is the will of God that all unbelievers come to repentance, or faith in Christ (2 Peter 3:9)

The points above show that God has a will for unbelievers, believers, and nations. Therefore, the will of God does not always mean being obedient to certain Laws of God, or being moral. For example, Christians are to abstain from immorality (1Thessalonians 4:3); not because by doing that they will go to heaven, but because they are already justified. The question now is: what is the **will of God** concerning how a person can be justified or accepted by God? God's answer (not a human being's answer) is given below:

For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.
John 6:40

It is very important we pay attention to the context. The context is about how a person can have eternal life. It is the will of God that everyone would receive eternal life. But God's will to save is one thing; Man's choice to accept it is another thing.

God's Righteousness Versus Man's Righteousness

The Bible recognizes two kinds of righteousness: the Righteousness of God, and the righteousness of man. The Righteousness of God was worked out by Christ on the Cross. Jesus Christ lived on earth without sin. He also went to the cross as a perfect sacrifice. His death on the cross was the work of God since He came from Heaven purposely to do the work of God. The ultimate work of God on earth was to be accomplished so that humanity could be justified by means of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. His finished work on the

cross became what we call, “The Righteousness of God”. For this reason, it is His Righteousness that we need, not ours. We should remember that the man Jesus was God, and at the same time was man. As God, He already had a perfect righteousness which was/is eternal and had always existed with Him. However, His humanity which was inseparably united with His deity (Godly aspect) needed to fulfill every aspect of the law, including going to the cross for the attainment of complete righteousness. So the righteousness of the Cross is God’s emphasis. It was this righteousness of Christ’s humanity which satisfied God the Father (Hebrews: 2:17, Romans 3:24-25). Therefore, whoever rejects Christ’s righteousness has rejected the righteousness of God, thereby standing on his own human righteousness which is unacceptable to God the Father.

On the other hand, the righteousness of a man (Human Righteousness) is all about what a man does (good works) in relation to the demands of the law, or any form of human good. The works of the law simply mean becoming obedient to the demands of the law. In other words, do (work) what the law asks of you. For example, if the law says don’t steal, murder, or commit adultery, etc., you comply. But you are not saved from spiritual death just because you have obeyed the law. The law’s purpose was to teach the Israelites about their need for salvation. The law was given in a single unit and therefore was always described as law and not laws. This means violation of one is a violation of the entire law. This tells us how serious the situation looks when a person is trying to be saved by any system of works. There is no human works that can provide salvation except the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of

the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified” Galatians 2:16.

Since no man was able to fulfill the demands of the Law, Jesus Christ had to come to fulfill every demand. Therefore, Christ became the fulfillment and the end of the law. The Jews in Jesus’ time trusted in their own righteousness, rejecting the righteousness of God. The Apostle Paul clearly states:

- ***“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is for their salvation. ²For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. ³ For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes”. Romans 10:1-4.***
- ***“and may be found in Him, not having the righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith”. Philippians 3:9***

All forms of religion teach that God can accept man in eternity only if man lives a good moral life (human righteousness). This places emphasis on what a man has done or can do and not what Christ has done. In religion, the focus is on a man’s work; his goodness, his abstinence from immorality, his offering of money to the poor, his good service to humanity, etc. Those were the things that the Jews thought would save them. Therefore, they saw no need of believing in Jesus Christ as their Savior. But according to the Apostle, they didn’t know (were ignorant) of God’s righteousness. They manifested their ignorance with zeal, but without knowledge. This deception has

been the struggle of all religions, yet the Bible plainly declares that our goodness is like filthy garment.

“For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away” Isaiah 64:6.

In fact the Hebrew word translated filthy rag literally means menstrual rag. Menstruation always made a woman unclean according to the Mosaic Law. This means that our human good is unclean and therefore rejected in the sight of God. Please, notice that God is not against human beings doing good things towards one another; He is only against the idea that the good works manifested by a person is the basis for which God will accept the person into His kingdom or into His eternal estate.

The Irreversible Transfer of the Believer

Once an individual believes in Christ, he is at the same moment transferred from the satanic kingdom/domain to God's kingdom. There is no middle ground or position of neutrality in the spiritual realm. A person is either in Satan's camp and belongs to him as his child or is in God's domain and belongs to Him as His child. Every person who is now a child of God was once a child of the devil. But the moment a person who is in Satan's kingdom places his faith in the message of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (the gospel), he/she is transferred at the same moment from Satan's kingdom to God's kingdom.

“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” Colossians.1:13.

Remember that it was God the Father who rescued, saved or delivered us from Satan's kingdom and transferred us to Christ's kingdom. A person can be saved from a situation and then be left alone afterwards. But when God delivers a person from Satan's domain, He doesn't leave the person alone; instead, He transfers the person to His own domain where He has many blessings for the individual and also much more provisions for his new walk with God (his new Father).

The provisions also include God's protective armor since the saved person no longer belongs to Satan (whose child he formerly was). That relationship has been forever broken because of the new irreversible transfer that has taken place. The saved person who may now be designated a *believer*, *saint*, or *child of God* is now seen as a traitor or an enemy by Satan. Jesus Christ is Satan's greatest enemy and therefore whoever is in alliance with Christ automatically becomes Satan's enemy. The transfer from Satan's kingdom is once and for all. It is not a process or progressive. It is a complete and irreversible transfer. This makes both the carnal and the spiritual (baby or mature, ignorant or knowledgeable) Christian an enemy of Satan. In fact this transfer makes Satan mad and keeps him busy and constantly looking for how he can make the believer's life a horrible one. He (Satan) tries everything to create hell on earth for the believer since he knows that he has forever lost the person to Christ's camp or domain.

Exclusivism of Jesus Christ

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the father but through me" John 14:6.

This is another dogmatic statement declared by Christ. Many religious people would have wished that this statement was not recorded in the Bible. It simply means that nobody can ever

make it to heaven except by believing in Jesus Christ. Enough truth has been declared in the Bible for man to know that Jesus Christ is the only savior.

“Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal” John 6:27.

Not only does the Bible teach that Jesus Christ is God’s only begotten son, it also reminds us that Christ Jesus is the only person on whom the Father has set his seal. Christ is the only one approved to save any human being from his spiritual death; no one else.

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” Acts 4:12.

I find this declaration by Peter very striking. Striking in the sense that the statement doesn’t give room for any alternative means by which any man can be saved. Firstly, he says, there is salvation in no one else. *“No one else”* includes you and any other human being. Therefore, whoever is trying to get salvation by personal effort is trying in vain. Secondly, Peter added, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved. This means that if you are looking elsewhere or trusting in a different person apart from Jesus Christ, then you are already on the wrong path. God is the one who saves, and Jesus Christ is His only provision and requirement for the saving of man’s soul from both spiritual death and eternal torment.

2- Biblical Progression of Salvation

Throughout the entire Bible, nowhere are we mandated to earn salvation by our personal efforts. The classic verse that most people who teach that a person can lose his/her salvation turn to as indicative of the Christians need to ‘work out’ his/her salvation is found in Apostle Paul’s letter to the Philippians:

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling” Philippians 2:12.

Unfortunately, the *loss-of-Salvationists* have taken that verse out of context and the idea that it teaches a possible loss of salvation is based on lack of understanding concerning the word, “Salvation” and its various usages in the Bible.

<u>Initial salvation verses</u>	<u>Ongoing or Progressive salvation verses</u>	<u>Final or ultimate salvation</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Saved from the penalty of sin (i.e. spiritual death and eternal torment (Eph.2:8-9, Acts 16:31a). 2. Receive eternal life (John 10:28, John 5:24, John 6:54. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing salvation is potential. This means that it is only those Christians who submit to the authority of Christ through His word can experience it (1John 1:9, James 4:8, 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This salvation will occur at physical death or at the rapture of the church (Romans 8:22-23, 1Thessalonians 4:16-18; 5:9) 2. This is the time that all Christians

<p>3. Receive the permanent indwelling of God the Holy Spirit (1Cor.3:16, 1Cor.6:19,</p> <p>4. You are born again (Titus 3:5, 1Peter 1:3, 1John 4:7)</p> <p>5. You become a child of God (John 1:12, Roman 8:16,</p> <p>6. You are permanently sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13, 2Cor. 1:22, Eph. 4:30)</p> <p>7. Initial salvation, e.g. Eph. 2:8-9, or Acts 16:31a does not deliver Christians from the presence of the sin nature (1John 1:8)</p>	<p>John 15:5)</p> <p>2. It involves the cooperation or the freewill of the believer so that the Holy Spirit can work through him/her (Philippians 2:12-13).</p> <p>3. This salvation is for those who are already saved (initial salvation).</p> <p>4. The Holy Spirit takes the word of God and transforms the believer to become like Christ (Ephesians 6:17).</p> <p>5. Nobody becomes like Christ at once. Without reliance on Christ or the Holy Spirit, a Christian cannot be</p>	<p>shall receive their resurrection or incorruptible body (1Corinthians 15:51-53).</p> <p>3. This salvation delivers all Christians from the presence of sin nature and its influences (1Corinthians 15: 54-57).</p> <p>4. This salvation is the final of all the salvations as far as man soul and body are concerned.</p>
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<p>8. It also does not deliver Christians from the power or the influence of the sin nature until physical death or rapture of the church (1 John 1:10, James 1:13-14</p> <p>9. Initial salvation requires only faith or “believe” in the fact that Jesus died for your sins (John 3:18, Acts 16:31a). Faith or “believe” is not a work.</p> <p>10. Initial salvation is an instantaneous action (it is not ongoing or progressive</p>	<p>loving, content or forgiving as Christ (John 15:5)</p> <p>6. Holy Spirit cannot do it without the word (Ephesians 6:17).</p> <p>7. This salvation delivers the believer only from the influence or power of the sin nature but not from the presence of sin or sin nature (1John 1:8)</p> <p>8. A Christian whose spiritual life has become better or improved over the years is as a result of ongoing salvation.</p> <p>9. This salvation does not guarantee a Christian Heaven;</p>	
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<p>action) 11. It neither needs maintenance nor improvement.</p>	<p>heaven is already guaranteed by His initial salvation 10. Progressive salvation is only realized in the life of Christians who are willing, obedient, and want God to work in their lives. 11. It is not forced on Christians; this is because they are not robots. 12. Every reward that a Christian receives in heaven will depend on how he responded to ongoing or progressive salvation (2Timothy 4:7, 1Corinthians 15:58)</p>	
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If the divisions indicated in the table are not recognized, there can be nothing but confusion of mind and subsequent contradiction of truth.

The table above is helpful in understanding the verse. Certain points need to be understood first before one can understand Philippians 2:12.

1. **Point 1:** The word, “Salvation” and its various uses must be understood.
2. **Point 2:** The reader should ask the question, which or what kind of salvation is Apostle Paul referring to; initial, ongoing (progressive) or ultimate salvation?
3. **Point 3:** The context in which the verse is quoted or read needs to be considered.

Remember the principle, “knowledge is built upon knowledge; lack of basic knowledge will affect one’s understanding in any advanced knowledge”. If the reader of Philippians 2:12 does not have the basic knowledge of **initial salvation** (see table), then it (ignorance) is going to affect his understanding of the verse in question. If all that he knows about the word, “salvation” is initial salvation, then he is quickly going to assume that Philippians 2:12 is referring to initial salvation. This is because no one can teach beyond what he knows. Therefore, his interpretation is going to be based on his limited frame of reference. Everything that Paul is saying in Philippians chapter 2 is all about ongoing or progressive salvation. He is speaking to the Philippians that way because they already have everything that initial salvation describes (see table). But to achieve progressive or ongoing salvation depends on series of choices and actions in response to the word of God.

Philippians 2:12 is a command to live the Christian life. It was a command made to people who were already saved. For example, somebody who is a royal is expected to carry himself

well in public. In the same way, a Christian, saint, or child of God must carry himself well in this world. Nobody behaves well in order to become royalty. Royalty is not something that is achieved through good behavior; it is something one is born into. Christians are born as royals and must behave as such. Apostle Paul was not preaching the gospel to the Philippian believers so that they could possess eternal life again. In the beginning of his letter, he recognized that the Philippian church was saved. We know this for a fact because of the phrase, “to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi” (Philippians 1:1). Remember that the term, “saint” is used to describe only the saved in the Bible. Concerning context, the reader has to look at the surrounding verses, i.e. verses that come before and after the verse under consideration.

From chapter 1:27, Paul gives a series of commands to Christians. To be saved, born again or be a child of God is one thing; to live the spiritual or Christian life is something else. To be a child of God does not guarantee instant successful spiritual life; it is expected, but it is not guaranteed. This explains why Paul asks them to work towards their Christian life. For example, the Apostle challenges them to conduct themselves worthy of the gospel, strive together as a team for the Christian beliefs(faith), and also not just believe in Christ, but also to suffer for his sake(Philippians 1:27-29). In effect Paul is saying that they should live like disciples; like Jesus emphasized in the gospel of John. They should be able to carry their cross and follow Christ as good disciples (Matthew 16:24, Luke 9:23). To be saved is one thing; to live as a disciple is something else. Remember that the words, “**believer**” and “**disciple**” are not synonymous terms. To become a believer or Christian is by faith in Christ; but to become a disciple is by commitment, faithfulness, endurance, denying of self, etc.

A lot of spiritual resources are given to Christians and therefore, they should live as people who have been so equipped. To

whom much is given, much is expected. Many spiritual resources like God the Holy Spirit, the word of God, the local church, etc., have been given to every Christian so that he can walk worthy of his calling. He is to walk worthy not because that is the ticket to Heaven, but because he is now in the kingdom of God and also has been given the resources to walk worthy. Nobody can walk worthy before God except he has been given what it takes to walk worthy (unbelievers are not given such resources). As Christians, it is expected that we walk worthy as heavenly citizens because that is where we belong (Philippians 3:20). To have fellowship with God the Holy Spirit, to have affection and compassion towards one another, to become like-mindedness as a team, to withstand oppositions, etc., can only be achieved in the absence of selfish ambition, pride, etc., (Philippians 2:1-4).

Paul continues to command the Philippians (and also Christians today) to have an attitude of humility as Christ, our Savior and master demonstrated (Philippians 2:5-8). He explains that promotion comes after humility (Philippians 2:9-11). Christ was promoted to such position because of His humility or obedience. The Apostle now comes to the verse in question which many see as a verse which teaches possibility of loss of salvation (verse 12). Their argument is that, a Christian has to work out his salvation to maintain or keep it or else he/she will lose it. This sort of argument implies that the arguer has Initial salvation in mind. But Paul has ongoing salvation in mind. We know this because he (Paul) is not talking about something the Philippians already possessed (which is non-experiential); rather, he is talking about something they didn't have yet but have to work for it to happen (experiential). This means that the context is not dealing with salvation as a gift which the Philippian believers already possessed.

So, one has to understand the “thing” which the believer possesses as eternal life; because the whole idea of salvation is

like a package with so many things wrapped inside. This means that when God rescued or transferred us from the kingdom of darkness, at the same time we were quickened from spiritual death to life, received eternal life, and received Righteousness of Christ as present possession. So trying to argue that one must work out to maintain his salvation implies that the arguer has eternal life and all the other things that come with salvation in mind.

The gift is not something a person receives by working; it is and can only be received by faith in Jesus' finished work. Every believer is already transferred (Colossians 1:13). Therefore, Paul is not saying that the Philippian Christians must work for their own transfer (salvation) as if they were still in the kingdom of darkness or were about to lose their eternal life whilst in the kingdom of Christ.

In learning the word of God, one must take his time to learn the distinction between effects or results of something and the means of achieving that thing. Right from Philippians 1:27, Paul had been describing or commanding them to show results of their calling. This is true when he said, **“Only conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (v.27)”**. Therefore, in Chapter 2:12, the Apostle is now commanding them (and us today) to use the available resources in order for those results (good works) that God expected to be realized. There is a great deal of difference between a receipt of mandate and fulfillment of such mandate. For the believer to come to the fulfillment of any scriptural mandate, he has to be connected with God the Holy Spirit for power. The Christian life is a supernatural way of life what requires supernatural power. It is a life of God working through us. Until we understand this biblical truth (that it is God who works through us), we haven't started the Christian life yet. Jesus said, “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:4). That is the same thing Paul the Apostle meant when he said:

“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” Philippians 4:13.

Both Jesus Christ and Paul are talking about one thing, ‘the power source’ or dependence on the Holy Spirit. To depend on Christ is the same as depending on the Holy Spirit; you can’t have one without having the other. In the context of John 15, Jesus was dealing with the mechanics or the means through which a believer can have the ability, strength or power to love. Remember that love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22); it is not something that we have power on our own to produce it. Therefore, once you are disconnected from the Holy Spirit’s influence or filling, you don’t have the power to love anyone: be it your wife, fellow believers, co-workers, family members, etc.

In the context of Philippians 4:13, Paul is saying, he can live in all kinds of situations; live in prosperity and also in deficiencies or lack. He said he could go hungry when there was no food, and also could endure suffering (Philippians 4:12). In effect, Paul was a content guy. Finally, he mentioned the secret about the spiritual life, which is, “the power source” or where he always got the strength to demonstrate those outward virtues of contentment, endurance, etc. Paul’s secret was that He was always connected with the Holy Spirit (v13). But also remember that the Holy Spirit never works without the word of God. To have the ability to love, forgive, endure, remain content, etc., is a supernatural life that can only be accomplished when you are connected with the divine resources (the Holy Spirit and the Word of God).

Therefore, when the Apostle commanded them to work out their own salvation, he meant ongoing salvation in the soul; from which all actions, results or good deeds proceed. For them to have a better spiritual life, they needed to make series of choices in their life. To be able to withstand opposition, love one

another, have contentment, have the humble attitude of Christ, etc., they needed to submit themselves under the working of God the Holy Spirit. Even though Paul had instructed or commanded them, and even though they might have the desire to fulfill such commands, they wouldn't be able to do so unless they had worked out the deliverance or salvation (ongoing salvation) of their soul from all sorts of bitterness, selfishness, etc. Once that was achieved, the Holy Spirit was free to accomplish the work of love, endurance, forgiveness, having the interest of a brother at heart, etc., (2:13).

You notice that whilst Paul commands them to work out their salvation, He adds that, it is God (God the Holy Spirit) who accomplishes every good deed in us. Spiritual growth is Paul's concern throughout the chapter. Therefore, Philippians 2:12 is not about how to go to heaven, how to receive eternal life, or how to maintain eternal life.

3- Eternal Life

Eternal life is also a doctrine that is associated with salvation. Once you have salvation; you automatically have eternal life which is God's own life. Unlike soul life which is given to us at physical birth, eternal life is God's own life which has always existed with Him. For God to exist He must have life to sustain Himself. That life is what the Bible calls eternal life. It is an intrinsic part of God. It also means having an endless period of time with God in eternity. For any person to live forever with God, he/she must have God's own life. In some passages in the Bible, eternal life is simply described as life or everlasting life.

Eternal life is one of the benefits that come to a person that puts his trust or faith in Jesus Christ. The benefit is always as a result of faith in Jesus' sacrificial work on the cross. Eternal life is not a condition for salvation. An unbeliever does not need to believe in eternal life to be saved; he needs to believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved. Salvation from spiritual death and receiving of eternal life happens at the same time. Chronologically, there is no time gap between the point of salvation and the point where the God kind of life (eternal life) is bequeathed to the believer; but there is a logical order in which the two realities happen. First of all, when a person believes in Jesus Christ, he is saved or delivered from spiritual death; secondly, he is given the God-kind of life. No person can receive eternal life before he is delivered from spiritual death. Even though eternal life and everlasting life are used interchangeably, the two are never the same. The possession of one leads to the other. As Christians there was a time that we didn't have eternal life (when we were unbelievers) but when we believed in Jesus Christ, we received eternal life from God and from that moment we began to have everlasting life. Everlasting life simply means that we will live

with God forever and ever. This is made possible because of God's gift of eternal life.

Eternal life is part of the salvation package. The moment a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, He instantaneously receives many things or blessings. Lewis Sperry Chafer in his *Systematic Theology, Volume Three – Soteriology*, carefully outlines as many as thirty-three blessings which are shared with the believer at salvation. Chafer describes them as, “thirty three stupendous works of God”. These stupendous works of God are revised by R.B Thieme Jr., who derives as many as thirty-nine blessings that Christ shares with the believer. He (Thieme) describes them as thirty nine (39) irrevocable absolutes, and one revocable absolute.

Eternal life is one of the irrevocable things that the believer receives at salvation. It is irrevocable in the sense that it cannot be retracted or reversed under any circumstance.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” Romans 6:23.

Eternal life is the only life that one can possess in order to be with God in Heaven. This life, as the Bible consistently insists, can only be received through the Lord Jesus Christ:

“Truly, Truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life” John 6:47.

The object of faith for eternal salvation is the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe many things in this life. For example, we believe that Israel is a country formed by God. We also believe in the Bible that it was God who created Adam and Eve; we believe that God exists; we believe that Africa is a continent, etc. Whilst such information is true, none of them has ever saved or can save a person from his spiritual death. Even though they are

all facts from the Bible or in life, they do not carry salvific content. Faith in Christ, that is, faith in his death, burial and resurrection is what saves a person. In other words, it is through that information, which we call the gospel that God saves us or give us eternal life.

“And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His son. ¹²He who has the son has the life; he who does not have the son of God does not have the life” 1 John 5: 11-12.

Sometimes some Christians think that eternal life is something that God waits till the believer gets to heaven before He gives him. That is very wrong; the Bible doesn't teach that. As you can see from verse 11, which says, “God has given us”. *Given us* is an accomplished act. This is not future tense verb; it doesn't say *God will or may give us*. The people to whom Apostle John wrote this letter were born again believers. They were as much saved as John himself. Therefore, confirming their positional universal salvation, John used the first person plural pronoun in the objective case, “us”. In effect what John is saying is this; any person who has the Son has life. The word, “life” as used in the verse above is not a reference to soul life; neither is John talking about life in the sense of living; but instead, he is referring to eternal life. What does it mean by the phrase, “he who has the son”? Is the phrase synonymous with “he who believes in the Son” or is it referring to the indwelling of Jesus Christ in every believer?” In Colossians 1:27, it is said that Christ is in every believer, the hope of glory. Though, the phrases are not synonymous, John is referring to both, since nobody can have Christ without first believing in Him; and nobody can believe in Christ without having Him as a result. Therefore, Apostle John is assuring everybody who has believed in Jesus Christ as his Savior that such an individual already has eternal life. Eternal life has both past, present and future realities. This is seen from the gospel of John:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life” John 5:24.

Three things are promised in the verse above: and it is important we pay close attention to them:

1. ***“Has eternal life”*** = **present reality**. The present tense verb emphasizes an ongoing reality. In other words, we keep having/possessing eternal life because we have believed in Christ.
2. ***“And does not come into judgment”*** = **future reality**. This judgment is not about the chastisement of the one whom the Father loves (carnal Christian); neither is it about the evaluation of Christians’ works or faithfulness after the rapture; rather, it is a reference to the judgment of all those who lived on the face of the earth but failed to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The promise is that; a Christian does not or will not face such horrible judgment in eternity future.
3. ***“But has passed out of death into life”*** = **past reality**. The past tense emphasizes that a Christian has completely and permanently passed out of spiritual death into the possession of eternal life. This means that the believer is not on probation, whereby God is waiting to see if he (the believer) can be good enough for God to save or approve of in some future time; or to monitor whether his good works can save him in the future. The passing out of death into life is true because of our relationship with Christ. The relationship is generated by a simple act of faith in Jesus Christ. Let us look at Paul’s use of eternal life as a future reality in Titus:

So that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:7.

The use of eternal life as a future reality by Apostle Paul is as if we (Christians) don't have eternal life yet; and that it is something we will have in the future. What Paul did was that; he chose to emphasize on the future reality of our eternal life. Paul's statement implies that we already have eternal life since our future glorification is impossible without our present possession of eternal life through faith in Christ. Therefore, we are confidently in an expectation of our future glorification or eternal life. Paul's statement is not conditioned in any "if" clauses at all. His statement is written with certainty. In other words, our hope of eternal life is guaranteed. When Apostle John dealt with the future reality of eternal life, he wrote, ***"...and does not come into judgment..." (John 5:24).*** Have we asked ourselves why the believer doesn't come into judgment in the future? The answer is that, he possesses eternal life in the present time (now); and will still have life in the future after receiving the resurrection body.

When Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha died, Jesus heard the news and came to the scene.

"Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed at the house. ²¹Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." ²³Jesus *said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha *said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me will live even if he dies, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷She *said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world" John 11:20-27.

Mary had great confidence in the Lord. Like the multitudes, she knew Jesus was a man of miracles and whatever He (Christ) would ask, God would grant it. Like Nichodemus, she believed that Jesus was from God and was a great miracle worker. But great miracles never save anyone from spiritual death. Both Nichodemus and Martha had to be born again. And the only way they could be born again was to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Martha had great understanding about the future resurrection. In fact every Jew, with the exception of the Sadducees believed in the resurrection of the dead. But what Martha didn't know was that Christ was the resurrection Himself. He is the first person to have resurrected, possessing a new body.

Only those who have trusted or believed in Him as their Savior will receive a body like the one Christ possesses now in Heaven. Jesus furnished Martha with more information to help her make a decision by telling her that He was the resurrection and the life (eternal life). You see, the issue is that, for you to have resurrection or resurrection body, you must first have God's own life at spiritual birth. Jesus then assured Martha in the last part of verse 25 that everyone who believed in Him would live even if they died. What does it mean to live even if one were dead? It simply means such a person will resurrect and live with Christ. In verse 26, Jesus said, the one who believes in Him will never die. This doesn't mean we will not die physically; it simply means that in the resurrection body nobody will die again or the soul will never be separated from that body. Presently on the earth, it is possible for the soul to be separated from the physical body; but it is absolutely impossible for the soul to be separated from the glorious or resurrection body in eternity. In verse 27, Martha did only one thing; she believed. How did she do it? Just by the simple act of faith. On the same thread Jesus spoke figuratively in John Chapter 6 as recorded below:

“This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”⁵²Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” ⁵³So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. ⁵⁴He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. ⁵⁶He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever” John 6:50-58.

How do we interpret a passage like this? The word of God must always be interpreted literally or taken exactly as stated in the text unless the context demands otherwise. From the context of John 6:50-58, there is no way Christ could be referring to physical eating of His body and literal drinking of His blood. Taking this passage literally would mean that Jesus Christ was asking the Jews to cut His body into pieces and eat it like one would eat a sausage and also drink His blood as one would drink water or wine. If Jesus' words were literal, then, in what form could He have still gone to the cross to die for the sins of the world? Obviously, Christ didn't mean physical eating, but He meant something else. The analogy looks like this; when a person eats food or drinks water, both substances end up in the stomach or the body. He said eating His body and drinking His blood would give one eternal life (v54) and the person will live forever (v58). By reasoning, this analogy could not represent

any other thing than faith in Christ. Just as everybody can eat and drink, in the same way everybody can have faith or the ability to believe in an object. In effect, Christ is saying, believe in me as the object of faith for eternal salvation and you will live. Figuratively, eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood is analogous to faith or believing in Christ. A parallel passage is found in John 4. In that chapter Jesus presented Himself to a Samaritan woman who came to Jacob's well to draw water, as the living water. According to Jesus, once a person drinks the water He gives, that person will never thirst again:

“Jesus answered and said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life” John 4:13-14.

Again, when Jesus presented Himself as the water of life, He did not mean literal water. He said everyone who drinks literal water would feel thirsty again but the water He gives never gets finished in the person who drinks it. Jesus Christ is indirectly or implicitly stating that eternal life is once and for all. How can a person drink momentarily from this water of Christ and never thirst again? The only thing this statement could mean is salvation is once and for all. ***Never*** means it shall not be repeated again. The burden of proof lies on the person who thinks that this passage is not talking about complete salvation. Salvation is not progressive or continuous. Drinking physical water is continuous. Some persons can take as much as four or eight cups of water a day. Even those who are fasting and deprive themselves of food are encouraged to drink water to keep their systems and organs in good working condition. This is because water is an essential element needed in the human body for man's physical sustenance. But whoever believes in Christ or drinks from Christ according to the analogy, will never in his life need to drink that water again. We do not believe in

Jesus Christ for a second; third or fourth time for eternal life; it is a singular or once and for all decision which is never to be taken again. Absence of sound Bible teaching (on the part of the pastor), or negative volition towards sound Bible teachings (on the part of the congregant), is the reason why many Christians keep accepting Jesus Christ in every occasion that a preacher asks people to believe in Christ. They do this because they do not have assurance of salvation. Ignorance of God's word leads to uncertainty of one's salvation. Eternal salvation is beyond our control; Christ is the one who controls our salvation, not us. It is about time people began to take the Bible seriously and study the scriptures like the Apostles did. The problem today is, many who occupy the pulpit do not know the difference between eternal salvation (which is a moment's decision in Christ), and the living of the spiritual life (which is progressive, and it is related to doctrines like discipleship, spiritual growth, rewards in heaven, etc.). Lack of these basic doctrines will always make eternal salvation or justification look like a reward instead of one's birth right.

CAN WE BE SURE OR KNOW THAT WE ARE SAVED?

Sometimes you ask some Christians this question: Will you get to heaven when you die? The common answers you normally hear are: **"Only God knows"; "I don't know"; "I believe that I will go if I am able to live right with God"**. All these answers are not in the Bible. It isn't about what you think or feel: you must not feel saved to be saved (it is not about feelings); and you must not think saved to be saved (it is not about what you think). It is about what God has promised or said in His word. God wants every Christian to know that he/she has eternal life and therefore is forever saved:

"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" 1 John 5:13.

Remember that God wants you to know that you are saved; it not something that is reserved for God to know. Of course, God already knows that every Christian has eternal life (He is Omniscient); but we are the ones that He wants us to know. God has communicated this truth to us in so many ways, including the verse above, and His aim is to give us the assurance that we have eternal life because we believe in his only begotten son, Jesus Christ. The purpose of this assurance is to clear our minds from all that.

4- Eternal Security

Before we take up this doctrine or teaching from the Bible, something basic needs to be understood. Let us consider language.

LANGUAGE

Language (whether spoken, written, or by the use of gestures) is one of the greatest things that God has ever given to the human race. God is the source of human language whether before the fall of Adam or after the demolition of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). Adam is the first person to have enjoyed language. God created Adam as an adult with already developed mental faculties. Adam and his wife were able to communicate their thoughts to one another through language. They also understood, perfectly, every promise and warning that God gave them. Without language they couldn't have understood themselves and God. Language remains an instrument through which thoughts or ideas are expressed in the form of words or speech. Word or speech is intimately connected with a thought. Therefore, you cannot speak what you have not thought. Language is expressed by a speaker to a hearer or listener. In the case of the Bible, God is the speaker, and the reader of the Bible is the listener or the recipient. God used human instruments to communicate His intents, ideas, thoughts, etc.

God has plainly communicated His mind, thought or intent which is connected with His security for our eternal salvation. If language is for a purpose, then we should allow the language of the Bible to mean exactly what God says. If God's warning to Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil meant exactly that, then we must equally accept what God also says concerning His security for Christians. If Adam truly died

spiritually and later physically as God said, then we must also accept or believe that He means every other thing that He has said in His word. He wanted Adam and Eve to understand Him, and they did understand Him. Jesus Christ wants us to understand His security plan for those who believe in Him. Therefore, He has spoken; and we also have to understand that He means what He says and He is not joking. There are certain words or concept in the bible belonging to a language which express certain realities of life. Such realities include the term, “born”, “father”, a “child”, and “security”. These realities or ideas could be expressed in terms of words or phrases which belong to a language.

BORN

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nichodemus, a ruler of the Jews; ² this came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him”, ³ Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God”

*⁴Nichodemus *said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he? John 3:1-4*

No human being has ever been born twice by his/her human parents. This is a universally accepted truth. To be born by a human mother is an instantaneous act that happens once in a lifetime. The birth is never repetitive. God uses the same language, “born” to express the same act of God in spiritual sense to create a new relationship with a person. So when God uses “born again”, He is saying that just as a human being is born once and the individual ever remains a child of the parents, so it is with God; if not, the use of language is meaningless. The

question we are to ask is this: how does this birthing (born again) take place? We have to remember that God is a God of methodology. By methodology, i mean the how; the means, mechanics, or way by which a thing is done. The bible tells us about the *how/means/mechanics as this:

“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him” 1 John 5:1.

Believing in Jesus Christ is clearly the biblical means of God birthing a person. Therefore, if one does not believe in Christ, he is not born of God or born again.

CHILD AND FATHER

If the standing or relationship that exists between a human child and the father is unchangeable and unbreakable in this life, then when God uses such language to express a divine act (relationship between Him and those who are born again by believing in Jesus), man must equally accept such truth (if not words or language don't make sense). The only difference is that a human father may die but God who gives birth to those who place their faith in Christ shall never die. And because God cannot die His children also cannot die. Even if they die physically before the rapture, they will live (resurrect) during the rapture (John 11:25). God ordained language for the purpose of communicating ideas, realities and truth from one mind to another. One of such realities or truth include the unending, unbreakable, inseparable relationship (not fellowship) between a born again believer and the Heavenly Father. This relationship starts here on earth and continues in heaven. This is what it means by “he will never die”.

A Christian may be ignorant of this truth; but it doesn't change the reality. A human child may grow up not knowing the father,

but it never changes the fact that the same man remains the child's biological father. Ignorance never changes the truth. Just as a human child cannot go back to his mother's womb or father's loins to reverse the existing relationship, so the child of God cannot reverse this relationship. Therefore, it is impossible for a Christian to lose his/her salvation. Since salvation comes as a package, loss of salvation would mean loss or a reversal of everything that came along with the package. This will include:

- a. Reversal of eternal life.
- b. The believer will go back to spiritual death.
- c. The believer will be sent back to the kingdom of darkness by God his father.
- d. The believer will lose the indwelling and the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, since he is said to have lost everything, he has reversed to become an unbeliever again. Of course God never teaches any of such things. Loss of salvation is false teaching and has its source from no other person but the devil. It is a teaching that is very distractive to a Christians' spiritual growth. It takes away the believer's confidence and assurance in God. The victim of such false teaching always thinks that salvation is dependent on himself; it is no longer seen as a work and gift of God in his mind. The victim struggles and never gets the assurance; yet God has explicitly stated in the Bible that He wants Christians to know that they are saved or have eternal life (1John 5:13).

SECURITY

Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines security as a protection against something bad that might happen in the future. Everyone has some sort of frame of reference for the word "security". Once somebody mentions the term "security", some people will remember the Police force; others think of the army;

whilst others also think of the bodyguards of some government officials. More so, others will think in terms of burglar proof which is normally used to secure a window or a house.

The doctrine of eternal security is derived from a promise made by Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John. The doctrine, though not explicitly stated, is implied. There are those who think that every doctrine in the bible must be explicitly stated before it becomes truth. Many doctrines are communicated from the Bible that are not explicitly stated; for example, there is nowhere in the Bible where it is explicitly, word for word, stated that Jesus Christ is equal with the Father. However, numerous passages, both from the Old and the New Testament clearly imply that He is equal with the Father in all the divine essence. This is why we need to use our God-given intellect to reason. God is not against reasoning. In fact, Christianity is not against reason, neither is it gullibility; rather it is faith in the correct object or information which is either explicitly or implicitly stated in the bible. If all things were explicitly stated in life, human reason wouldn't be necessary to possess. The only way God is against man's reason is when reason is chosen against the word of God. This happens when man develops his own propositions or premises and then draws his conclusion; he then chooses his conclusion as a reality or truth even if it contradicts the Bible. Christians' reasoning must be Bible based. Having understood the concept of security, and the need to reason with the Bible, let us now consider the doctrine.

***“And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand”
John 10:28.***

In my earlier teaching on salvation, I explained that we have been transferred from the satanic kingdom into God's kingdom. The promise of John 10:28 is to assure us of a divine security. This means that no angelic persons or human systems can break

into that divine security or protection. Man's system is as weak as man himself. Man is limited in many things just as his intensions or systems. Angels, even though are exceedingly intelligent and much more powerful than men, are equally limited in power. It is only God who does not have limitations. It is important that we understand this particular point so that we can appreciate not only the importance and purpose of a language, but also comprehend, believe, and fully rely on the limitlessness of God in everything that He is and does. When God speaks, we must take His words serious because He is not a comedian who is trying to entertain men with jokes. When Jesus said **“they shall never perish”, and “no one will snatch them out of my hand”**, it wasn't an ordinary, unfaithful man who was talking; neither was it the faithful angel Michael; it was God Himself who was doing the talking. If a Christian can lose his salvation, then language has failed in the very purpose for which it was given to mankind. “They shall never perish” does not and cannot in any way change to mean “they can perish”. In the book of Ephesians, Apostle Paul confirmed a Christian's complete eternal security in terms of the sealing of the Holy Spirit:

“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory” Ephesians 1:13-14.

Just take a look at how the apostle presented the order of steps in salvation.

- **Step 1** = *“after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation”.*

- **Step 2** = *“Having also believed”*. The gospel is the object of faith for salvation. You can’t believe in something else to be saved; be it a person or your own good works (Eph. 2: 8)
- **Step 3** = *“You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise”*.

Please, notice that Paul doesn’t speak in terms of possibility; but rather of certainty. There are no “ifs” or “maybe’s”; he is only declaring what is already the truth. Anytime a person believes in Christ, the next step of action is that he or she becomes completely sealed with God the Holy Spirit. The sealing is not progressive or continuous action. This means that the believer is not on a probationary period whereby the Holy Spirit is watching him to see if he (the believer in Christ) will make himself good enough for or worthy of the sealing of the Holy Spirit. That is not what Apostle Paul said; instead he said that the Holy Spirit’s action was an instant and complete sealing. Why would God the Holy Spirit seal us if it were not for a purpose? The sealing of the Holy Spirit is a pledge or guarantee that those who have believed in Christ will inherit or possess a new body at the Rapture. Also we have become God’s own possession or property and He will definitely come back for us; and He will come back not for a select few who have lived right with Him, but for all Christians without exception. After He has come back for all Christians and taken them to heaven, He will then judge or evaluate their works and reward those who lived their Christian life faithfully. This is the period where some will lose reward, but not salvation.

Concerning our appearance before Jesus Christ in Heaven (Judgment Seat of Christ), Paul writes that all Christians will face Him (not some Christians). He emphasizes the word, *“all”* in the following verses:

1. ***“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” 2 Corinthians 5:10.***
2. ***“But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God” Romans 14:10.***

Those who didn't live faithfully or right with God will receive nothing, except their resurrection body. All this will take place in heaven, and not on earth. One would have expected the former self-righteous Pharisee (Paul) to say, “Some will appear before the judgment seat of Christ”; but he had to teach and write what the reality is. This distinction is what many Christians have failed to recognize; thereby causing them to teach loss of salvation. Christ is not coming for only the good or the nice Christians; He is coming for all who believed the gospel of salvation.

“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” Ephesians 4:30.

Look at the consistency in Paul's writings; he insisted that all the Ephesian Christians without exception were sealed. They were sealed not by Paul's letter; but the very moment they believed in Christ in Ephesus. Paul was only telling them a fact or something that already existed. They were sealed in the past, with the result that they remained sealed at the time of receiving the letter and they continued to be sealed unto physical death. Therefore, they will rise up or receive their brand new, glorious bodies at the resurrection or the rapture of the church. This is also true with everyone who has once in his lifetime believed that Jesus died for his sins.

Why is Ephesians 4:30 asking Christians not to grieve the Holy Spirit who keeps sealing them? This is because apart from sealing, there is another job that the Holy Spirit has been assigned to do in our lives. The job is that He is the only one who can form, grow or develop the character of Christ in us. To believe in Jesus Christ and become a child of God is one thing; to grow spiritually to maturity in order to manifest the character of Christ is something else. Eternal salvation or justification by faith in Christ and the spiritual life are never the same. Anybody who doesn't understand this distinction is in great trouble; he is in great trouble because he will ignorantly turn justification into works. Once this happens, he will never understand the spiritual life.

Between the day of our salvation or justification and the day we die or at the rapture, the Holy Spirit's job in our life is to transform us into Christ. This is also called sanctification (experiential or progressive sanctification according to theologians). It is so designated because it is progressive in nature. Unlike justification which is instantaneous or momentarily, progressive sanctification or the spiritual life (i.e. Holy Spirit working in the believer) is progressive. This explains why the Bible categorizes Christians into baby and adult Christians, or carnal and spiritual Christians.

The Bible doesn't say that baby Christians are not Christians or are not saved. In fact the babies or the carnal Christians are just as much saved as the mature Christians. The only difference is that, the matured have identified the provisions given in the Bible, and they have allowed the Holy Spirit to work in them; but babies have not. Whilst a mature believer will cast his pain, pressures, disappointments and challenges upon God, the baby Christian will blame everybody around him; including, even God. The mature Christian has grown to understand that God is sovereign and therefore He remains in charge of all his difficult moments. The mature believer never believes that some demon,

witch or wizard from his maternal or paternal family (a common teaching in Africa) has power over the sovereign God to destroy him or her as a child of God. He/she has learnt to give thanks to God in all situations; even if the situation is unpleasant. He is able to quickly remember that all things work together for good for those who love God (Romans 8:28). The mature Christian's ability to endure pressure, insults, health and financial challenges is not by his own strength or power; it is God the Holy Spirit who brings that Christ nature in him. His patience toward unpleasant circumstances and people is based on his understanding and reliance towards the word of God; which is the sword or the tool that the Holy Spirit uses to transform obedient Christians.

Please note that a person's attachment to a church doesn't make him or her a mature Christian. One can faithfully be in a local church for even fifty years and still remain a baby, spiritually. You can spend all your time in prayer; from weekly prayer meetings to frequent night vigils, and still remain a baby; why? This is because no one grows up spiritually by prayers or by attending a church. You only grow spiritually by bringing or subjecting your mind to sound Bible teaching since faith comes by hearing (not by prayer) and by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17).

For one to be like Christ in character; be it patience, love, forgiveness, perseverance, etc., depends on the person's faith on the truth that God is still in control. This faith or truth never comes until there is sound hearing of the word from effective Bible teaching. Many local churches have made prayer a substitute for the word of God or Bible teaching. This has created the impression in the minds of many Christians that Christianity is all about prayer. Prayer is a very wonderful weapon; but like every weapon, you must know how to use it. Local churches are ordained to provide sound Bible teachings to the flock so that the flock can think correctly, but many have

used prayer as an excuse to avoid studying and teaching the Bible; leaving the congregation malnourished. If a local church's program is such that it has more hours of prayer than Bible teaching, then there is a problem. When a believer is taught to understand prayer, he/she can fulfill the command of 1Thessalonians which says:

“Pray without ceasing” 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

This command is not about going to church to pray. It is about praying at every second or minute of opportunity that you get. This means whether in the office, your car, your room, etc. The command in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, is not about corporate or group prayer; it is a reference to individual prayer life. Until a local church devotes most of its time to Bible teaching, it will be impossible for the members to have their mental faculties or senses trained to discern good and evil; false teachings from sound teachings. That is the reason why many Christians today are following evil doctrines and practices without even knowing. Only solid food or advance doctrines from the Bible can bring them to maturity. This is well said by the writer of Hebrews:

“For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil” Hebrews 5:13-14.

Without sound Bible teaching, not only does the believer remain a baby and spiritually malnourished; he also can never grow to understand or be sure of God's security for his salvation.

THE SUPPOSED LOSS OF SALVATION VERSES/PASSAGES IN THE BIBLE

Galatians 5:19-21	Matthew 24:13	1 Corinthians 6:9-11	Hebrews 6:4-6	Revelation 2:7
1 Corinthians 9:27	Matthew 25:1-10	Colossians 1:21-23	Hebrews 10:26-29	Revelation 3:5
Philippians 2:12	Luke 9:62	Ephesians 5:3-7	Hebrews 10:38-39	Revelation 22:14
Matthew 7:13-23	Luke 12:42-46	2 Thess. 1:8	Hebrews 12:14	Revelation 22:17-19.
Matthew 8:12	John 8:31	2 Timothy 4:7-8	James 2:17	1 Timothy 4:16
Matthew 10:22	John 10:27-28	Titus 1:1-2	2 Peter 2:18-22	
Matthew 12:31	John 15:1-6	Hebrews 3:6-14	1 John 2:3	
Matthew 16:24-26	Galatians 5:4	Hebrews 3:12	1 John 2:5	

The above passages have troubled many pastors and church members; leading them into thinking that a believer in Christ or a Christian can lose his or her eternal salvation. The passages when considered independent of both preceding verses (i.e.,

those verses that come before the verses under consideration) and the succeeding verses (i.e. verses that follow the verse or passage under consideration), create the impression that the already saved person can lose his or her salvation and become an unbeliever again.

We have to understand that the Bible, originally, was not written in chapters and verses. It didn't contain chapter breaks and verses as we see today in different translations that are in the market like, KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV, etc. The chapters and the verses are the works of Bible translators. They did that to enable Bible readers to easily identify certain ideas or thought expressed by the writers of the Bible. For this reason, thought or the intent of the writer must be allowed to flow to the end of the thought. And if it has to flow to the end, then, we don't have to interrupt it; either by limiting our interpretation to a single verse or verses or sometimes to a single chapter. This is because certain thoughts or ideas sometimes go beyond the end of a particular chapter. Just as we wouldn't pick one sentence out of a whole page or pages of a written letter and make conclusion independently of other sentences or pages, so we must not do when interpreting the Bible. Simply put, we must stay in context whenever interpreting the word of God. Let's look at a few of those 'troubling' verses listed above

“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” Galatians 5:19-21.

For the fact that Paul addresses the Galatians as church (1:2) and brethren (3:15; 4:12, 28; 6:1) implies that they belonged to

the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13); therefore they were all saved (Justified). Paul insulted the Galatians for trying to live the spiritual life by following Moses' law as a standard (Galatians 3:3) and went on to state one of God's purposes for calling or saving Christians (5:13). He stated that we are called into freedom (i.e., no longer under the bondage of the law); however, we shouldn't use that freedom as a license to give in to the sinful demands of the sin nature (flesh). In the same verse 13 of chapter 5, the Apostle, by contrast said, "But through love serve one another". This means Christianity is a call to serve one another; and not a call to rule over others as the Gentiles or unbelievers do (Matthew 20: 24-28). Without love a Christian cannot humbly serve his fellow Christian brothers; and there can be no love in the heart of the Christian if he is not filled with the Holy Spirit. If a Christian is not filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit, then he/she is consciously or unconsciously controlled by the sinful nature which still lives in us even after our salvation. Christian service is a result of, not a means to the spiritual life. Humble service (free from pretense) is a result or outworking of God the Holy Spirit within the soul of the obedient Christian. Since serving one another in love leads to reward (both in Heaven and in the coming kingdom), Paul was admonishing the Galatians and every Christian today, to walk by the Holy Spirit (5:16); so that we will not fulfill the desire of the flesh. This is true because there is no position of neutrality; you are either controlled by the Spirit or controlled by the flesh. If you are controlled by the Spirit, you can serve in love and God will reward you for serving faithfully or serving in love (2 Timothy 2:12); but if you are controlled by the sin nature, the outcome is always sinful (Galatians 5:19-21).

How come a Christian is able to commit such sins of Galatians 5:19-21? The answer is given in the context (16-17). When a Christian is not under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he/she becomes powerless; he lives his life like a mere man or unbeliever. Therefore, since he is serving the sin nature (flesh),

he cannot inherit anything in the coming kingdom (Galatians 5:21).

To inherit the kingdom; to be placed in a place of honour or receive reward in the future is based on faithful service from the filling of the Holy Spirit. The phrase, **“will not inherit the kingdom of God”** doesn’t mean **‘will not enter the kingdom of God’**. Inheritance and entrance are not synonymous terms in the word of God. Inheritance has to do with rewards. You can be in a place and yet inherit nothing in that place. In conclusion, Paul says, Christians have legally and *positionally* crucified the flesh (Galatians 5:24). This is true because of our positional death, burial and resurrection in Christ. Therefore, we are not legally in bondage of the flesh because we have God’s power (the Holy Spirit) living in us. In verse 25, Paul says since (if) we live (keep living) by the Holy Spirit, we should also walk (live the spiritual life by means of the filling of the Holy Spirit. In effect, what Paul is saying is this; we should not live under the control of the flesh; because if we do, we will end up living a sinful life which cannot get us any inheritance or reward in the coming kingdom of Christ that begins after the end of the Great Tribulation of the antichrist. Therefore, this passage has nothing to do with loss of salvation.

Let us consider another troubling verse:

“But I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified” 1 Corinthians 9:27.

On the surface and without consideration of other verses, this verse seems to imply that a Christian can be disqualified from going to heaven. Like I said earlier, the Bible was not written in verses, and therefore context! Context! Context is the key to understanding what the writer meant. Bear in mind that this verse isn’t the only verse in the chapter of the entirety of Paul’s

letter to the Corinthians. So, let's look at the context in which he made that statement. To get a proper contextual background we have to begin our reading from 1Corinthians 9:24.

In verse 24, Paul is asking the Corinthians if they are not aware of the fact that many run a race but only the winner receives a reward. The time and the way the Romans did their athletic competition were different from our Olympic games today where rewards are given to the first, second and third placed athletes. During Paul's time only the winner was rewarded. The idea presented by Paul is about living the spiritual life one day at a time by following laid down rules by God. If not you may think you are running (living the spiritual life), but you will end up not following the rules. And just as human sport regulatory and governing authorities disqualify competitors for their awards when they cheat, so is the Christian life. The spiritual life is likened to a race not in the sense of believers competing among each other: It is not about showing that we are more spiritual than others; it is about knowing the mechanics or the rules, and then living by those rules. How we do things are very important to God. This includes how we pray, serve one another, evangelize, worship, etc. In effect, Paul is saying that he doesn't live his life any how so that he gets disqualified for his reward (verse 27). So there is a reward for the Christian race. The Bible teaches about all kinds of rewards or crowns.

There is no reward for believing in Jesus Christ; this is because it wasn't a work that you did. You only believed in Christ's death, burial and resurrection; and you got saved. But discipleship, commitment, faithfulness, etc., attract rewards. For a Christian to be committed or be faithful, he/she needs spiritual growth. The important question every Christian must ask is after salvation what next? The Bible's answer to the question is grow from milk to solid food (Hebrews 5:11-14) by going to Bible classes.

5- Motivation for the Spiritual Life

What at all will motivate or compel a Christian to live the spiritual life or to pursue righteousness if he cannot lose his salvation? If a Christian becomes assured of his eternal salvation or security, won't that make such a Christian continue in committing sin or relax in his walk with God? These are the questions that normally come into our minds. But remember that man is bent to works and propelled to think in the opposite direction of what God thinks. Remember Jonah? Whereas God loved the people of Nineveh and wanted them to repent, Jonah wanted them to perish. This is the way human beings naturally think. Apart from the word of God that can correct the thinking of Christians, they (Christians) are not different as far as this propensity for self-righteousness and the thought that God only loves the good guys is concerned. We are naturally evil; both in our thinking and actions. The same propensity for evil thought was seen in the life of Apostle Paul before his conversion. As far as he was concerned, all men had to live a particular life before God could accept them. In fact, he always wanted to help God and felt that his actions would help others to live a good life. All of us are bent in this line of thinking apart from the application of God's word.

Many Christians think that the only way for people to stop sin is when they are insulted in the face or condemned verbally. Many have ignorantly become fruit inspectors of other believers; checking whether they are producing fruits of righteousness or not. They forget about their own spiritual life and concentrate on others. Such Christians think that believers will live their life any how if they get to know that they cannot lose their salvation. So what they think is the best way to keep Christians from sinning is to teach them that they are not really saved or they can lose their salvation if they don't walk in a particular

way. As far as they are concerned, the teaching of loss of salvation is the best motivation for Christians to live right with God. But if both those who teach and believe in loss of salvation would be sincere to themselves, they can testify that many Christians who think they can lose their salvation are seriously *swimming in sins. They don't know that to stop sin requires divine power and therefore, it isn't the teaching or the belief in loss of salvation that will keep the sinful or carnal believer from sin. The hold of sin over the believer is broken only when the Christian who is caught in sin recognizes and uses the divine provision for stopping sins. Therefore, loss of salvation cannot be the divine motivation for Christians to live the spiritual life.

Christian motivation comes from understanding certain truth. A believer's understanding of **God's love, reward for living right, and divine chastisement** become the motivating factors for the Christian to live Godly. The teachings on these three subjects or doctrines from the scriptures imply that Christians are to be motivated by those truths.

Love

When a Christian begins to ponder on his former position of spiritual death and how he was going to end up in the lake of fire but was rescued by Jesus Christ when he believed in Him, this knowledge must help him to appreciate God's love for him. His appreciation must come in a way of loving God too. When someone does something good to us, it normally makes us appreciate and love the person. In the same way, knowing what Christ has done for us on the cross, we must equally love Him by means of obeying his teachings. We must obey God not because we want to go to heaven or because we don't want to go to hell (that is impossible), but because of what He did for us on the cross. This should be the primary motivation for all Christians.

“For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf” 2 Corinthian 5:14-15.

Christ’s love compels us not only to live for Him, but also to love fellow believers. Love is expected in every Christian’s life; especially concerning his dealing towards fellow Christians. How we know we love God is when we love fellow Christians. Whatever we do, if it is not of love, doesn’t profit us anything. But when a Christian lives in love, it profits him something; after all he/she shall be rewarded for that.

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing” 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

Reward

Apart from love, one other motivation for living the spiritual life is the reward that awaits Christians who live faithfully on this earth. Understanding the Christian reward only comes through Bible teaching. Many Christians are not even aware that faithful Christians will be rewarded; but the reward is not about going to heaven. Heaven is not a reward; it the believer’s birth right. Like every child naturally comes from where the parents come from; so Christians also share the same origins with their Father (God). Failure to learn this distinction of rewards from eternal salvation will go a long way to disturb one’s interpretation of

the scripture. Such ignorance leads many to work for their salvation instead of recognizing that it is attained through faith alone in Christ alone.

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” Hebrews 12:1-2.

There is also a set joy before us. God has many crowns to be given to all who will lay aside every sin that easily entangles them and endure every challenge in this life. Many Christians are going to be so excited because of the kind of crowns or rewards that God is going to give them. The writer of Hebrews is challenging us to concentrate on the spiritual life (which holds the promise of eventual reward) as Christ did when He endured the cross and as a result He is now sitting in the place of honor. The point is that every Christian who endures will also receive a reward. This knowledge should be the believer's motivation to live the spiritual life, and not loss of salvation.

Divine Discipline (Chastisement)

Again, apart from the love of God and rewards that He has reserved for the faithful, another thing that should motivate us to live the spiritual life is divine chastisement. Discipline or chastisement is designed by God to bring His children into fellowship with Him. God is interested in fellowship so that a Christian can produce good works. Good works cannot not be produced by carnal or the sinning Christian since it is God the Holy Spirit who works through the believer (Philippians 2:13).

The Holy Spirit's purpose is to create the image of Christ in us. For the Holy Spirit to be able to do this, the believer must stay away from sin. This is because sin, whether mental attitude sin (jealousy, bitterness, etc.), sin of the tongue (gossip, maligning, etc.), and overt sin (thievery, fornication, kidnapping, fraud, etc.) puts the Christian out of fellowship or communion with God. The only way the carnal believer can get back to fellowship is using the divine provision of 1John 1:9. Unless a carnal Christian confesses his/her sins, there is no way God the Holy Spirit can control his soul. Even though the Holy Spirit continues to reside in him, the Spirit cannot use the word of God to bring the image of Christ through him so long as he stays in a sinful life.

A Christian who fails to confess his sins and turn from his evil practices is subject to divine discipline; although he may or may not be aware of it. In most cases, the carnal or baby Christians don't even know when they are under divine discipline. But the mature ones know whenever they are under discipline. This is the reason why knowledge is very important. How sad it is for a believer to live his/her life in misery without even knowing that he/she is under divine discipline. Ignorance of the doctrine of discipline will make such a miserable Christian blame other people for his/her unhappiness in life. For example, David, who was not a baby, but mature believer, understood that his affliction was as a result of going astray from his walk with God:

“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word” Psalm 119:67.

The psalmist recognized that before he was afflicted or disciplined by God, he first of all went astray; i.e. he first committed sin. This acknowledges the truth that divine discipline serves as a motivation for the Christian not to sin.

Does Assurance of Salvation Promote Sin?

The answer to the question above is a BIG NO! An assurance of salvation is never taught from the scriptures as something that makes Christians sin. Therefore, it is very wrong for anyone to assume that assurance of salvation will motivate Christians to sin. Concerning why a Christian commits sin, the Bible doesn't put the blame on knowledge of assurance or belief in eternal security. Christians sometimes become emotional and as a result they stop to think from the perspective of the word of God. If a Christian really wants to understand the Bible, he/she must learn to control their emotions when it comes to learning the Bible. Every person comes to the Christian faith with some pre-conceived notions. The Bible is not about what you think or feel; it is about what God thinks and says. Therefore, whatever the Bible teaches from context, we must be willing to control our emotions and listen. This is why the Bible says all scripture is for our correction. If everything we know or practice is right, then we don't need any Bible teachings in our life. Nobody can be corrected from false teachings, false beliefs, and practices without sound Bible teaching. This explains why there are so much false beliefs and practices because there are no sound Bible teachings in many local churches. There are no opportunities for most Christians to even ask questions regarding the Bible. God expects us to approach the Bible with objective, open minds and find out exactly what He is saying in His word. For example Many Christians do not understand eternal security let alone believe it; yet the same believer commits sin. Sometimes, such Christians even stay in prolonged carnality or sin.

The important point to think about is this, if a believer who doesn't believe in eternal security is committing sin just as the believer who believes in eternal security commits sin; then why should anybody think that the one who knows about eternal security commits sin because of the truth (eternal security) that

he knows? This is a very wrong and evil assumption. It is an attack on the grace teachings of God. Hundreds and thousands of Christians who do not know or believe in eternal security commit sin every day. So why do we sin? Do we have to blame ourselves for ignorance of eternal security or we must blame ourselves for knowledge of eternal security? Well, we don't have to blame ourselves whether for ignorance or for knowledge of eternal security; rather, we have to blame ourselves for wrong use of our free will by succumbing to the temptation of the sin nature or temptation from the world.

Therefore, it is evil and also illogical to assume that Christians commit sin because of understanding of the grace teaching of eternal security or assurance. If both those who know grace and those who do not know grace commit sin, then it is reasonable to conclude that there is something else that makes both those knowledgeable and those ignorant of God's grace of assurance to commit sin. There is a sin nature that still resides in us even after believing in Jesus Christ. It is the source of temptations to every personal sin that we commit (James1:14-15, James4:1). It is not everything that the devil makes us do. We commit sins because we choose to do what the sin nature in us is asking us to do. During the one thousand year reign of Christ, Satan will not be present on the earth yet human beings will still want to do evil despite Christ ruling with the rod of iron. People will want to sin because there is something evil that resides in them; which they are born with. We as Christians still have the same sin nature. But the good news is that, God has given us the following provisions to help deal with it:

- The Local church
- The Holy Spirit
- The Word of God/ Prayer
- The Gift of Pastor/Teacher

The Christian, who has the Holy Spirit indwelling him, may be in full control of his freewill and belong to a vibrant local church; but when the pastor fails to prepare in the scriptures, the impact can be disastrous. Knowledge is built upon knowledge; a disconnection from one doctrine (bible truth) will definitely affect the believer in understanding other doctrines. If we don't understand salvation, eternal life, and eternal security, it will be difficult for us to understand doctrines like reward and chastisement. This is because it will make no sense to think in terms of reward and chastisement since heaven is supposedly portrayed as a reward in itself for those who live Godly. Either heaven is seen as a birth right of every Christian or it is a reward for only faithful Christians. The Bible teaches about rewards and admonishes Christians to live Godly so that they can attain those rewards. However, the Bible also teaches that because some will fail to live Godly, they will lose their rewards. The first question that every Christian must objectively ask is this, does the Bible teach loss of reward? If the answer is yes, then who are those people who will lose their rewards in Heaven? This is because the argument of the *loss-of-Salvationists* is that, only the spiritual, mature or those faithful Christians who live Godly will go to Heaven. By their teachings, Heaven becomes a reward for only those Christians who live righteous with God. They may not say it; but that is what their teachings imply.

The problem or the weakness of such argument is that, it is silent on those who will lose their rewards in heaven. Three categories are in view here: the spiritual Christian (those who live Godly), the Carnal Christian (those who live sinful or legalistic lives), and the unbeliever (the person who has not believed in Jesus Christ). According to the Bible, both the spiritual (mature) and the carnal Christians will face Jesus Christ at the Judgment Seat of Christ after the rapture of the church. This is what Apostle Paul meant when he emphasized on the phrase, “**we all**” shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2Corinthians 5:10, Romans14:10). Please, note that this

judgment will take place in Heaven. It will take care of how Christians lived their lives whilst on this earth. Those who lived Godly will be rewarded (2Timothy 4:7-8, James 1:12), while those who lived their lives anyhow, both legalistically and carnally will lose their reward (Colossians 2:18; 2Timothy 2:12; 2 John 1:8); but will still remain in Heaven. Nobody gets to heaven and then is later cast away.

On the other hand, the unbeliever will face the White Throne Judgment. The two Judgments are not the same: one is for the saved (both carnal and spiritual believers), and the other is for the unsaved (unbelievers). The place and the time of the judgments are also not the same. The White Throne Judgment is for only those who refused to believe that Jesus Christ died for their sins. Whilst the judgment seat of Christ takes place in Heaven immediately after the rapture, the Great White Throne judgment will take place after the 1000 year reign of Christ. It is not as if God has not given all these rich information in the Bible; but because of lack of preparation, many of the doctrines in the Bible have never found their way onto many pulpits.

Since it is now clear that all Christians will find themselves in Heaven, it is only those who lived their lives carnally after believing in Christ will lose their rewards in Heaven. In as much as it is God's will for every Christian to be holy, it is also important to recognize that you cannot be holy when you avoid Bible teachings in your life. The strength of the spiritual life is derived from hearing and hearing the word of God through faith. It is through the word of God (not politics, football, music, or comedy) that you can get the strength of faith to endure, rejoice, and to commit matters into God's hands when the going gets tough.

God bless you for reading.

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Must Every Person Believe in Jesus Christ?

Books:

Preparation for the Pulpit

Salvation, Eternal Life, Eternal Security

