

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Revelation 2:8-11**.
- B. The 4th lesson in a series on the plan of salvation.
- C. Being faithful means--realizing your potential. Xian maturity is something that comes to those who desire to live faithfully to X.
- D. Xians are to have great confidence in their salvation (1Jn. 5:13).
These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

I. IT IS POSSIBLE TO FALL AWAY FROM GOD.

- A. There are many passages that warn Xians about the possibility of losing their salvation.
- B. Notice the following:
 - 1. Living according to the OT Law nullifies the grace and forgiveness found in X (Gal. 5:1-4).
It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.
 - 2. Willful, purposeful sin without repentance is not forgivable (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31).
*(Heb 6:4-6) For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.
(Heb 10:26-31) For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*
 - 3. Peter presupposed apostasy in saying it is usually more difficult to return after doing so (2Pet. 2:20-22).
For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."
 - 4. The HS prophesied that there would be a great falling away (1Tim. 4:1-3).
But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, 3 men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.
 - 5. Paul had many desert him and go back to the world (1Tim. 1:18-20; 2Tim. 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:3,4; 4:10).
(1Tim 1:18-20) This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, 19 keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. 20 Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

(2Tim 1:15) You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

(2Tim 2:16-18) But avoid worldly *and* empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 *men* who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some.

(2Tim 4:3,4) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

(2Tim 4:10) for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

- C. Therefore, it may be concluded from these passages that it is possible to have salvation, and then lose it by falling away (unfaithfulness).

II. WARNINGS ABOUT BEING UNFAITHFUL.

- A. The NT contains many warnings written to Xians to stay faithful.

(If a person was “once saved, always saved” why does the NT contain Romans through Revelation?)

- B. Notice the following:

1. Every Xian’s responsibility to see that no one turns away (Heb. 3:12,13).

Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

2. The Galatians were doing well until someone (something) hindered them (Gal. 5:7).

You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?

3. The LS is a weekly examination of our life to God (1Cor. 11:28-30).

But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

4. We are to grow, not stumble in the Xian graces (2Pet. 1:8-11).

For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind *or* short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

5. Xians are to use their talents lest they lose their reward (see Mt. 25:14-30).

- C. The Xian can have confidence in what the Lord has done, but sin is always a problem.

IV. HOW TO LIVE FAITHFULLY.

- A. Some practical advice about living faithfully:

1. Study your Bible daily; a few minutes a day makes a difference (Ac. 17:11).

Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so.

2. Pray daily; talking to God is the one Friend you really need (1Th. 5:17).

pray without ceasing;

3. Worship/fellowship attendance; recharge your spiritual life (Heb. 10:24,25).

and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

4. Get to work; busy Xians are usually happy and healthy (1Th. 4:11).

and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,

5. Encourage others; someone is always watching (Gal. 6:10).

So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the

household of the faith.

- B. Many have said that people as well as businesses are either growing or dying. If this be true then to keep from falling away one must work at growing spiritually (2Pet. 3:18).
but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. After becoming a Xian it is possible to fall away from God and go back to the world.
- B. The key is to mature spiritually and one can have great confidence in their salvation.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.