

## Tough Questions Series

### Can a person lose their salvation? Is our security in Christ conditional or unconditional?

#### The Association of Vineyard Churches

The Vineyard has decided not to take a stand on this issue. We receive people and pastors who believe in eternal security and those who do not. A slight majority of Vineyard pastors believe in the unconditional security of the believer. We do ask that no one quarrel about it. It is good to honestly wrestle with the scriptures each side uses to defend their point of view.

#### Viewpoint: The Conditional Security of the Believer

- **Definiton** – A person’s salvation is secure as long as he abides in Christ and not in wickedness. If he renounces his faith in Christ, he is lost. This is called apostasy. If a he persistently resists the Holy Spirit by the habitual practicing of wickedness, he is severing himself from Christ. Unless he repents before he dies, he will be lost. (Those who believe in eternal security say that such a person has never been saved.)
- **Theology** - The human’s will is fallen and it will not, on its own, choose to repent and follow God. However, when God draws a person to Himself it is possible to resist that drawing. A person has the freedom to accept Him or reject Him both before and after salvation. After coming into Christ, God’s grace and power are present to keep one in Christ, unless one persistently ignores or resists them.
- **Groups** - The Early Church Fathers, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Mennonites, Methodists, Wesleyans, Nazarenes, Assembly of God, Foursquare, and others.

#### Scriptures with Conditions - these verses should call us to faithfulness.

Matthew 7:21-27 – “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father in heaven...”

Matthew 18:21-25 – The story of the unforgiving servant. Because the servant was unwilling to forgive as he had been forgiven, his forgiveness was reversed.

Matthew 25:1-13 – The story of the 10 virgins. The five prepared ones entered in, the five unprepared ones were rejected.

Luke 8:11-15 – The story of the four Soils. It is possible to temporarily “believe.” Christ is calling us all to be good soil that keep the word.

Luke 12:42-46 – The story of the Lord and his steward. The unfaithful steward will be assigned a place with the unbelievers.

John 15:1-6 – The illustration of the Vine and Branches. Jesus is the source of life, and as long as one dwells in Christ then that one has life. Failure to abide in Christ results in fruitlessness and removal.

Romans 11:20-22 –But they (Israel) were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.

1Cor. 6:9-7 – Paul, addressing the church, says unless those who practice wickedness repent, they will not inherit the kingdom of God. Ten examples of wickedness are listed. (2Cor. 12:21-13:5- lists three such wickednesses, Eph. 5:5-7-lists three such wickednesses).

2Peter 2: 20 If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.

2Peter 3:17 -Therefore, dear friends, since you already

know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.

1John 3:24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

1Timothy 4:1 – some will abandon the faith...

Rev. 2: 7 - To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God....10 Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life....11 He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.

Rev 21:7-8 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death."

#### **Numerous Verses have an "If" phrase**

John 8:51 –“I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.”

Romans 8:12-14, 17- “if you live accord to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”

1Cor. 15:1-2 - “you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word...otherwise you have believed in vain.

Col. 1:21-23 – “without blemish and free from accusation- if you continue in your faith...”

Gal. 5:1-4 – “If you let yourself be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all...you who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ.”

1Timothy 4:16 “watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

1Timothy 6:12-13 “if we disown him, he will disown us, if we are faithless (a temporary lapse), he will

remain faithful”

Hebrews 2:1-3 – “how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?”

Hebrews 3:6 And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Hebrews 3: 12-14 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

Hebrews 10:38-39 – ““But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.’ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.”

James 5:19-20 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

1John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. (*The word “if” occurs twenty-one times in the book of 1John*).

1John 5: 16 If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.

#### **More verses with Conditions:**

Galatians 6:7-8

Col. 2:18-19

1Tim 1:18-20

1Tim. 5:6 & 15

1Tim. 6:10 & 20-21

Hebrews 6:4-9

Hebrews 10:23-29 & 35-39

Hebrews 12:25

James 2:14-26

#### **Viewpoint: The Unconditional Security of**

## the Believer

- **Definition** – A person should examine if he is really saved, because there are false conversions. (2Cor. 13:5) However, a true believer will persevere in their faith to the end and can not lose his salvation.
- **Theology** - The human's will is fallen and it will not, on its own, choose to repent and follow God. Those God has chosen, He then draws with irresistible grace and they are saved. Those He saves, He also preserves in Christ. Therefore, once you are truly saved, you can not be lost. The one who comes in faith to God, through Jesus, is unalterably redeemed and God, by his grace and power, will bring that person to Glory.
- **The History** - The doctrine of perseverance or "eternal security", in its present popular form, was first taught by John Calvin's in his Institutes of Religion in 1536.  
But roots of Calvinism are found in Saint Augustine of Hippo around 428 AD. However, what Augustine actually taught was perseverance of holiness not just faith. That perseverance was a gift given to the predestined. And that no one would know if a person had been given that gift until he died. Then it would be evident if that person had been faithful the whole time and had not fallen from holiness.  
The early church fathers prior to Augustine taught conditional security.
- **Groups** - Reformed Churches, Presbyterians, Southern Baptists, Conservative Baptists

**Scriptures declaring a sure Salvation - These verses should fill us with confidence, hope, and assurance of our salvation.**

John 5: 24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

John 6: 37-40 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do

my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 10:27-29 – My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no-one can snatch them out of my hand.

John 14: 16-17 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

Rom 5: 8-9 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

Rom 8:29-30 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son ...And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. (This future event is so sure that it is talked about in the past tense!)

Rom 8:38-39 – Nothing "in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Rom 11:28-29 – As far as the gospel is concerned, they (Israel) are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.

1Cor. 1: 8-9 He will keep you strong to the end, so

that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. (This promise was given to a group of Christians who had numerous severe problems!)

Eph 1:11-14 - 11 In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will...Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Eph 4: 30-31 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

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

Col 3: 3-4 - For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

2Tim. 4: 18 -The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 10: 13-14 Since that time He (Jesus) waits for His enemies to be made His footstool, because by one sacrifice He has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy.

1Peter 1: 5 - who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

1John 3: 2 - Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1John 3: 9 No-one who is born of God will continue to (habitually) sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

1John 5:11-13 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.