

# Personal Perseverance

***Today we have a great emphasis on what I would call cheap grace, or we presume on grace and sin is not considered such a big thing because grace covers it all.*** Some years ago I often spoke for South Sheridan Baptist Church on a Christian radio station in Denver, Colorado. I was told one day that my emphasis on confessing sin wasn't for today, that I John 1:9 wasn't for the Christian, that since Christ paid for all our sin -- sin was cared for and everything was already under the blood. I was shocked at such interpretation, the whole book (I John) was written to the saved and the first chapter covers the Christian's needed response to 1) fellowship we have in Christ Jesus, 2) our need to walk in the light, and 3) our personal responsibility to deal with daily sin. John included himself as he said "*we*" over and over again.

If you looked at the history of Biblical teaching you would find that a 100 years ago or so people did not talk about eternal security but instead the emphasis was on ***The Perseverance of the Saints***. People in spiritual leadership in churches were concerned about the new convert manifesting a change in life, the truth that if anyone be in Christ, he is a new creature (II Cor. 5:17). If those who made professions did not manifest the working of the indwelling Holy Spirit as a result of their salvation, their testimony concerning salvation was questioned.

Praise the Lord, He preserves His own. But as the old writers used to emphasize, ***God uses the perseverance of the saints to preserve His own***. Think on that! If it were possible for the born again person to lose his salvation he would cease to be a child of God. God does preserve His own! ***While the Word of God teaches us this in many places*** (I Pet. 1:5; John 5:24; 6:37; I John 5:9-13), ***the Word also puts a great emphasis on the perseverance of the saints. This is what we want to look at:***

## **Why The Christian Should (will) Persevere:**

1. *Because God expects us to "work out" daily that salvation He has given us:* (Phil. 2:12,13)

If you study the context it is obvious that Paul was writing to the saints (1:1). Paul called them beloved, and he encouraged them to "*work out their salvation*". . . that is to work on living the salvation they already had which belong to them. The grace of God works effectually in us and in its working God brings change in our lives. But at the same time we are urged to daily live out that inliving work of God. To work out problems in mathematics is to work the problem out to its conclusion, so we are to work on living daily that which is ours in Christ.

So when we are saved there will be an active, operative work of God in us, and an active response on our part to what God is doing -- "*for it is God that worketh in you both to do and to will of His good pleasure.*" (Phil. 2:13) God has begun that good work in us that He will continue until the day of Christ. (Phil. 1:6) For sake of an illustration in all of this. . . it would be foolish to argue that since God gives us breathe, we do not need to breathe -- God does preserve us through our own perseverance.

2. Because the saved are to “continue” in the faith, grounded and settled: (Col. 1:20-23)

Again Paul is writing to saved people who happened to be at Colosse. They had been alienated, enemies in their mind by wicked works, but had been reconciled, saved through the blood of Christ, and had peace through that blood.

Christ’s purpose is also set forth -- to present those who were saved (us as well) holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable in His sight. And yet they were to persevere. The Holy Spirit speaking through Paul urged them to continue in the faith, grounded and settled. They (and we) are to continue and not to fail, to be grounded and not move away from the hope of the gospel. Though we can say we know Christ as Lord and Savior, still we are admonished to “*continue in the faith, grounded and settled.*”

3. Because the saved are also exhorted to continue in the faith: (Acts 14:22; 11:23)

Barnabus was ministering to those at Antioch as the leaders at Jerusalem sent him to labor among the new converts in that city and area. He urged them to “*cleave*” to the Lord. The word cleave has the same meaning as the word in Genesis 2:24 which tells us to cleave to our spouse. It means to “*to cling to, to be stuck to.*” (11:23)

In Acts 14:22 we are told the believers were exhorted to continue in the faith, that through much tribulation they would enter into the kingdom of God. So for us, yet we hear so much today about eternal security (and it is a precious truth) and the emphasis is so much on what God has done for us -- that little is said or taught about our part of continuing, in the faith, to cleave to the Lord. We are indeed to persevere!

4. Because it is a sad thing to be chastened of the Lord: (Heb. 12:5-11; I Cor. 11:30-32)

Consider what the Word says in I Corinthians 11:30-32. Clearly it is stated that if we don’t judge our own sin (sinful ways, unforsaken habits of sin) God will have to judge us. His judging takes the form of chastening and because of such chastening some in Corinth were sick, some weak and some had died prematurely under divine judgment. While they were still God’s child (for He chastened His own that they would not be condemned with the world) yet that judgment was severe and final. There is a sin unto death we are told in I John 5:16-21. We too can experience the heavy hand of God in His chastening work when we do not deal with our sin as His child. This could include a lot of things such as neglecting His known will for our lives. (James 4:17)

Surely it is obvious that the Child of God needs to persevere in his walk, his testimony, in an inner righteous life -- yes, in every aspect of his life in order to produce the fruits of a godly life. (Consider Titus 2:11-14)

The Hebrews text tells us that God chastens every child He has received, that all of the saints will know His chastening. This He does out of love in order to produce holiness, the peaceable fruit of a righteousness life in His children. We are told not to faint when rebuked of Him, nor to be hard of heart or to resist His loving hand of chastening -- for whom He loves He chastens and scourges.

Do we desire God’s best for our lives? Do we want His good hand on us, the sense of His sweet presence, and daily blessing? -- then we need to **discipline ourselves** about our responsibility in the **perseverance** necessary in our daily life! ***Don’t presume on God’s grace, don’t decide that sin is not exceedingly sinful and displeasing to our Holy God.***