

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED?

A Verse by Verse Journey to Find the Truth & Remove
the Confusion from the Doctrine of Eternal Security

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By Michael Chriswell of RelentlessHeart.com

In answering the question of eternal security, people typically fall into one of the following belief camps.

1. You cannot fall away from grace in Christ and lose your salvation.
2. If you fall away, you were not a true born again believer to begin with.
3. Even as a born again believer, you can still fall away and lose your salvation.

There are several good reasons for there being so much confusion and division on this subject. I first became frustrated and confused about eternal security, when I found that two well-know and very respected ministers, both of whom have significant sized ministries, and appear to have the blessing of God on their work, believe completely opposite on this subject. Naturally, I concluded that one of them had to be wrong. But I thought to myself, how can this possibly happen if they are both learning from the same Holy Spirit?

How could God allow one of them to teach you can never lose your salvation and the other to teach that you absolutely can? I could no longer take “man’s” word for it and I decided to do an exhaustive study in Scripture for myself. What would I find when there was no influence of personal or denominational bias? If all I had to go by was the Bible, what belief would I come to? I’m going to tell you my position and why I believe it, but more importantly, I have assimilated all of the Scriptures on all of the three above positions for you, so that you can decide for yourself.

Naturally, our human reasoning prefers the position of having eternal security and never being able to lose our salvation. There are even a few Scriptures, when considered separately, which can be interpreted to suggest that we cannot lose our salvation. However, just as a bird cannot fly with only one wing, neither can a doctrine. Therefore, we must determine if this position is in accordance to the Bible’s *actual* and *whole* teaching, or could it be that we are interpreting it to say what we really want it to say?

“Honey, do these pants make me look fat?” We know the answer she wants to hear, but is it the actual truth?

Most of us naturally cherry pick a Scripture or two and then say, “Ahaa...*this is what the Bible says about (fill in the blank)!*” For example, a person might very much like to read Ecclesiastes 10:19 and say, “*Do you know what the Bible says about money...it says that **money is the answer for everything!***”

Imagine if I just read that one verse and said, “*I have no need to read or hear anything else about the subject of money because here is exactly what the bible says about it and this is what I believe!*” If I chose to do that, I would be the bird with one wing flying in circles, but going nowhere. I would also likely have to stand before God on Judgment Day and give an account for my love of money. I would also give an account for mishandling the word of truth. And when I said to Him, “*But Lord, that’s what your word says!*” He might very likely look back at me and say, “*My word also says... **‘There is no God’**. (Psa 53:1), and yet here you stand before me now, so you should have kept reading...no bird can fly with only one wing.*”

I trust you are wise enough to recognize that there are multitudes of other Scriptures that are required in order to know what the Bible *actually* teaches on the doctrine of money. However, the same cannot often be said of these other important subjects, including this one on salvation. Far too often, after hearing a few Scriptures about salvation over and over, most of us just assume that we fully know what the Bible teaches. After all, our

favorite radio minister told us this and he is loved and respected by millions, so he can't possibly be wrong. Never mind the fact that he is under the pressure of a denominational influence to teach and believe a certain doctrinal position on eternal security.

Are you willing to gamble on anything less than the FULL counsel of God's word on this subject, irrespective of what your favorite pastor teaches? I certainly hope not, my friend. I certainly hope not. You shouldn't even take my opinions for your own. You must see for yourself.

"I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him." (1Jn 2:26-27)

Let Us Be Like the Bereans:

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. – Acts 17:11

For the first nineteen of my twenty-six years of being a Christian, I simply believed what I had been taught by my pastors or favorite teachers, which was "once saved, always saved". I heard their Scripture references for support and I liked what I heard, therefore I believed it. After all, they were men of God who knew the Bible way better than I did, and they had seminary degrees, so who was I to question their doctrine?

From Wikipedia:

Doctrine (from Latin: *doctrina* or possibly from Sanskrit: *dukṛn*) is a codification of beliefs or a body of teachings or instructions, taught principles or positions, as the essence of teachings in a given branch of knowledge or belief system.

From Michael:

A **Doctrine** is a formal belief we hold as the truth of God, on any given subject in the Bible (original sin, repentance, baptism, grace, judgment, salvation, predestination, gifts of the Spirit, rapture, etc.), after we have assimilated and studied the various passages on that subject, taking into account the frequency, the context, the Covenant (Old or New), and the urgency of the teaching. It allows us to say with confidence, "This is what the Bible fully teaches on this particular subject."

For many years, I was convinced that what I believed (about many things) was the truth according to God and I had no reason to question my beliefs. However, after my personal experience of losing everything TWICE (See story at www.RelentlessHeart.com/story), I had to question everything I thought I had ever known about God, the devil, church, marriage, life, success, failure, faith, sin, affliction, suffering and brokenness. I discovered that much of what I believed about being a victorious and faithful Christian was flat out false.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. - Isa 55:8-9

A Call for Humility:

Starting in 2009, with God's help, I began to spend hours each day in the Bible and prayerfully asking the Lord to teach me the truth. I told him that I had listened to men and I had failed to acquire the truth. I humbled myself before Him and told Him that I wanted to start with a clean slate and was willing to set aside everything I had ever thought I knew about Him and the Bible. I wanted to learn directly from my Father. That didn't mean I couldn't listen to men anymore, but it did mean that I would never again take a man's word for it, or allow a man to be my single source of teaching. I would become like the Bereans (Acts 17:11).

Here is just a small little taste of the surprises that lay ahead. Many Christians believe with great conviction that there is absolutely nothing you can do to fall away from grace and lose your salvation, yet look what the very last words in the Bible say. This sentence is the 3rd from the very last sentence in the entire Bible.

And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. – Revelation 22:19

For the person who doesn't want to be convinced against their will, their mind is already reeling with objections about why that verse isn't relevant, because after all, who would ever take away words from the book of Revelation?

In love for your soul, as my brother or sister in Christ, I just ask that you slowly read all of the Scriptures we will cover. Remember, not even I would attempt to make a doctrine on the above Scripture alone. I'm simply making the point that the Bible ends with a clear reason why you absolutely can lose your salvation, and we are already wrong if we try to say, you can "never" lose your salvation. There is much more to come friend!

If, like me, you have believed for a long time that a person can never lose their salvation and you are already feeling big resistance to any other possibility, I'd like to ask you to pay attention to one thing. Remain conscious about how many of the Scriptures you will read below, and then you feel the need to dismiss, avoid, misinterpret, or justify why they can't possibly mean what they say. This will likely happen several dozen times as you go through them. Then simply recognize that anytime we have a problem with God's word, it is clearly us that must change, not God's word or our interpretation of it. This calls for HUMILITY.

Let God be true, and every man a liar. – Rom 3:4

And as we move forward, let's set aside the temptation to make this about one person or one denomination being right and another being wrong. This is about knowing the truth according to how God sees it, irrespective of denominational or personal bias. God hides the truth from the wise and learned and reveals it to babes (Luke 10:21).

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does. - Jas 1:5-8

I knew in my heart that this subject had to be clearer and less mysterious than men were making it out to be, so after much prayer, I set out to do a thorough treasure hunt in the Bible on this doctrine. To start with we'll look at a few of Jesus's main warnings about falling away.

What Jesus Taught About Falling Away:

- You are the salt of the earth. But **if the salt loses its saltiness**, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be **thrown out** and trampled by men. – Mat 5:13
- Blessed is the man who does not **fall away** on account of me. – Mat 11:6
- Because of the increase of wickedness, the love [for God] of most will grow cold, **but he who stands firm to the end will be saved**. – Mat 24:12-13
- Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, **but in the time of testing they fall away**. – Luke 8:13
- From this time **many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him**. “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve. – John 6:66-67
- **If anyone does not remain in me**, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. – John 15:6
- “All this I have told you **so that you will not go astray**.” – John 16:1
- “I am coming soon. **Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown**.” – Rev 3:11

Starting from the position I had always believed, that I could not fall away or ever lose my salvation, I had to ask myself, “*If it were not possible to fall away, or if I have no responsibility in maintaining my own salvation, then why did Jesus warn us about it?*” And, if it could only happen to false believers as many believe, then why are there over 60 other passages, *written to the elect and saints around the world*, warning us to hold firmly to our faith so that we don't fall away? **If these do not apply to true born again believers, then why are they in the Bible that true born again believers are to read and obey?**

The Summary of What Scripture Actually Teaches About Salvation:

After putting true faith in Christ as Lord, which is consummated by faith in your heart and the confession of your lips (Rom 10:10), and which is evidenced by your turning from sin in your mind and action (Acts 26:20), and being born again (a new nature) John 3:3-8, symbolized in baptism (Mark 16:16, 1 Pet 3:21), we are “saved” to the point of now having a *future inheritance* of salvation (Col 3:24, 1 Pet 1:3-9), but not in actual possession of it yet.

In our new “saved” position, we are no longer declared to be an enemy of God and we have been reconciled to him through the death of Christ Jesus (Col 1:22). We have been marked with his seal of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13), much like a King would authenticate his letters with his signet ring pressed into a wax seal, and salvation is now *reserved* for us in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-4), but we don't actually attain it, until we have stood firm in our faith to the very end (Mat 24:13, 2 Tim 2:12, Rev 3:11). As it relates to salvation and eternal life, what we really have is a future inheritance, *not* an actual possession of salvation yet (Rom 8:24-25, Heb 9:28).

What The Bible Teaches About When We Actually Receive Salvation

1. Mat 10:22 All men will hate you because of me, but **he who stands firm to the end will be saved.**
2. Mat 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and **will inherit eternal life.**
3. Act 20:32 "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an **inheritance** among all those who are sanctified.
4. Rom 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more **shall we be saved** from God's wrath through him!
5. Rom 8:25 For in this hope we were saved. **But who hopes for what he already has?** But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.
6. Rom 13:11 The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because **our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.**
7. 1Co 6:9 Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers **will inherit the kingdom of God.**
8. Eph 1:13 Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing **our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession...**
9. Eph 5:5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any **inheritance** in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
10. Phi 3:13 Brothers, I do not consider myself **yet to have taken hold of it.** But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and **straining toward what is ahead,** ¹⁴ **I press on toward the goal.**
11. Col 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, ...²⁴ since you know that **you will receive an inheritance** from the Lord as a reward.
12. 1Th 5:8 putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and **the hope of salvation** as a helmet.
13. Heb 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those **who will inherit salvation?**
14. Heb 6:12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and **patience inherit what has been promised.**
15. Heb 9:28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but **to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.**
16. Heb 10:39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe **and are saved.**
17. Heb 12:16 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his **inheritance rights** as the oldest son. ¹⁷ Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected.
 - a. This verse not only indicates that salvation is a future inheritance, it warns us about being like Esau who sold his inheritance and later changed his mind, but was unable to attain it back.
18. 1Pe 1:3 In his great mercy he has given us new birth into **a living hope ...** ⁴ and into **an inheritance ...—kept in heaven** (KJV "Reserved") for you, ⁵ ... **until the coming of the salvation that is ready to**

be revealed in the last time.

19. Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, **I will give the right to eat from the tree of life**, which is in the paradise of God.
20. Rev 2:10 **Be faithful, even to the point of death**, and I will give you the crown of life.
21. Rev 21:6 To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. **7 He who overcomes will inherit all this**, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

So, now we can see clearly that the Bible teaches that we do not yet actually possess salvation but that we have a FUTURE INHERITANCE of salvation, if we stand firm in our faith to the end of our life. **Then** Jesus gives us the right to eat from the tree of life, which is where we will actually possess eternal life and live forever.

If we wanted to be technical here, we could use a human argument and say, “*You cannot lose something you do not yet possess, so you can’t technically lose salvation because you don’t even have it yet.*” The reason we don’t say that, is because although you don’t actually possess salvation yet, you are marked for salvation and if you endure to the end with God’s help, it will be as if you had salvation all the while. We can then conclude that you were in fact “saved” from your conversion.

Nevertheless, our inheritance of this future salvation is His free gift, and we did nothing to earn it, but we must hold to our faith firmly, or we will lose our future inheritance of salvation. We are going to look at all 64 passages below, but for now simply look at the clear teaching in this verse on the need to stand firm.

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. - Col 1:21-23

We can see from this passage that if you allow anything to cause you to shrink back from your hope and faith in Christ, then you will not be saved. You will only receive salvation if you stand firm in your faith in Christ. When I try to share this with people, some will quote the following passage from Paul and say, “*See, you are wrong...there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God.*”

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Rom 8:38-39

Here we see the error of “cherry picking” a single Scripture in order to get the Bible to say what we want it to. It seems to me that God has intentionally spread His truth throughout the Bible so that a man can never lazily point to one Scripture and form a doctrine out of it, without condemning himself. It is also clear to me that if you want the Bible to say what you want it to, God will allow you to believe exactly what you want. However, the wise child of God must seek the whole counsel of God before determining doctrines.

In answer to their above objection, I wish to first point out a passage written just three chapters later in the same letter, by the same exact person (Paul).

You will say then, "Branches [Jews] were broken off so that I could be grafted in." Granted. But they 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. - Rom 11:19-22

Incidentally, we could wipe out nearly all false teaching if they would all just follow this one passage of Scripture that commands us to consider "both sides of God", not just his loving side, or just his wrathful side.

Without proper study, and by leaning only on human reasoning, we might ask, "*But wait, isn't Paul contradicting himself in these two passages, saying in Rom 8 that he thinks nothing can separate us from the love of God, but now here in Chapter 11, he says we will be cut off if we don't remain in God's kindness?*"

I would like to show you the answer to this seemingly contradictory teaching of Paul, which shows our need of reading the Scriptures very slowly and methodically. Let's look at the Romans 8 passage *again* and see if we can find what these things have in common which Paul says could never separate us from the love of Christ.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Rom 8:38-39

The thing that they all have in common is that they have nothing to do with us ourselves. They are all either powers or created things that are external of us and completely separate from us. To better illustrate my point, let me re-write the verse to point out a few things that Paul did not include among the list of things that cannot separate us from the love of God. Note: These are all listed in other passages that you will see.

For I am convinced that neither sin nor disobedience, neither false prophets nor living as under the law, neither anger or lust nor disowning Jesus, nor hypocrisy, neither love of money nor unforgiveness, nor anything else in yourself, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, do you see clearly how Paul never taught that you couldn't remove yourself from Christ's grace and salvation? Even I believe that nothing external of me can remove me from the hands of Jesus, but I equally believe that the below Scriptures indicate that we can remove ourselves from his hands or we can put ourselves in a position which would allow ourselves to be removed through negligence. This is literally what the Bible teaches.

You should know that I, Michael Chriswell, still believe it is possible for me to fall away from the faith through any of the above underlined issues, and the ones you will see detailed in later Scriptures. And, I still believe

that I have a responsibility to work out my own salvation with fear and much trembling (Phi 2:12). Like Paul, I also do not presume to have taken hold of salvation yet (Phi 3:13), and like Paul taught in that above passage in Romans 11, I believe it would be arrogant to say I could never fall away (Rom 11:20-21, 1 Cor 10:11-12).

Does that mean I'm now earning my future salvation, if it's dependent on me in some way to keep it?

The answer is **not at all**. Let me share an illustration and then the actual Scriptures on this subject:

Let's say Bill Gates grafts you into his will and says you will inherit his \$10 M second home when he dies, as a free gift. You could never afford this house, but he even lets you go ahead and move in and all he asks in return is that you maintain it. Not only could you not likely ever afford to live in that house, but you couldn't even afford to maintain it. However, you have no worries because he even gives you a cleaning, maintenance, and improvement budget to do so. He then promises that no one from the outside will ever be able to take the home from you, or to sell it out from under you (Think Romans 8:38-39).

So you move in and soon after you start having friends over to see your new amazing free house from Bill Gates, that none of them will believe until they see it. During one visit you take a break from your friends to sit down at your beautiful office kitchen to take care of a few maintenance projects you have going with the house. One of your friends walks by and sees you and asks what you are doing. You explain that you are writing out a few checks for various projects on the house. Your friend, with a frowned look on his face, says, "Wait a second, you said this house was a free gift...this isn't a free gift if you have to pay money to maintain it." You then explain, "Oh, it was part of the agreement and actually Bill deposits money into my account each week so that I can maintain the house." My responsibility is to simply apply the payments.

Could anyone now rightly say that if you agreed to these maintenance terms, you are now earning the free gift? Not at all! You are simply obeying the agreement of maintaining the gracious gift he is giving you, and you can't even take credit for *that*, because he gives you the money to maintain it.

Now, suppose you start taking the gift for granted and you start leaving the doors unlocked when you leave, having questionable individuals over, or spending the maintenance money and your time on other things, at the neglect of caring for the house. When Bill comes to make his final settlement with you and transfer the deed over to you, would he not be justified in taking back your inheritance since you lost respect for it, and you didn't do *his will* in the agreement? Yes, he would.

So now we must ask the same question of Jesus. Would Jesus Christ be out of line or unjust if he decides to take back our reserved inheritance, or blot our name out of the book of life (Rev 3:5), if we lost respect for his death on the cross, shrunk back in our faith (Heb 10:38-39), or trampled his grace (Heb 10:29)?

No he would not, my friend!

The truth is that while we did nothing to earn the gift of salvation, we do still have an *obligation* to maintain the gift, with the grace He has given us (Rom 8:12). **We need to get over this erroneous idea that we have nothing to do, and that if we dare do anything, we are "earning" our salvation.** The Bible says that only those that **do** God's will make it to heaven (Mat 7:21, 1 Jn 2:17). The way I see it clearly in Scripture is that if you take that "do" out, you **do not** make it to heaven.

But remember, no one can *do* God's will apart from God's enabling (grace), so at no time can it be said that we earned anything by our doing. However, if we don't do our part, empowered by His grace, the time will come when it will be said that we squandered or trampled His gift and grace, even if we didn't do it intentionally. Remember what terrible thing happened to the servant who buried his Master's money (talent) Mat 25:24-27?

The salvation gift (saving grace Rom 3:23-24) comes first, then our obligation to maintain that gift is met with the second part of that gift (enabling grace Col 1:29). So what happens if we neglect this gift of salvation, or if we squander His grace? See Heb 10:26-31 below.

Scriptures Supporting Position #1 (We Cannot Lose our Salvation):

The six verses below state that no one or nothing can take us out of Jesus' hand, **but again that doesn't mean we can't remove ourselves**. These verses are true, but keep in mind they are only one wing on the bird and they presume upon the other wing of our humble dependence on God's grace and our need to hold firmly to our faith and to remain in His love (See Jn 15:5-7, Jud 1:21). Additionally, as with all doctrines, they must be balanced with the 64 verses under Position #3.

- 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. – John 6:39
- I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. – Joh 10:28-29
- For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Rom 8:38-39
- Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. – 2 Co 1:21-22
- And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. 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 1:13-14
 - NOTE: The presence of the Holy Spirit is a guarantee of our future salvation, **if** we hold firmly to our faith in Christ. Again, this is done by action, not simply by saying, “I believe in Jesus”. The disciples that walked away from Jesus Christ in John 6 still believed that he was Jesus and they obviously believed He existed. But they left him and walked away from him through their actions. They were no longer going to follow and obey Him as the Lord in their life, through their actions. It is critical to understand this.
- To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—Jude 1:24

We can't say we have actually attained salvation until we have stood firm to the very end. I don't know what tests of my faith lay ahead; do you know what tests you will face? What if your whole family turns against you, ISIS knocks on your door, the government turns against your faith, or you face major suffering and give up on God, or you fall for the world and away from God? If you do, you will lose your inheritance. You can naively say, “These will never happen to me”, or you can recognize that this calls for deep humility and dependence on God, not the arrogance of saying, “*I could never fall away*” (1 Cor 10:12, Rom 11:19-22).

Scriptures Supporting Position #2: (If you fall away, you were never a true disciple to begin with)

1. 21 “Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who

does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, **'I never knew you.** Away from me, you evildoers!' Mat 7:21-23

2. Mat 15:13 He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots.
3. 1Jn 2:19 They went out from us, **but they did not really belong to us.** For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

NOTE: I contend that while there are many, many, many professing "Christians", who are not truly saved, yet we cannot use the above Scriptures to apply to all true believers concluding, "Well, if they fall away, they were never saved and therefore there's no reason to warn others, etc. If that were the case, then God would have had no need for the 64 others passages and warnings we shall now see.

The 64 verses below (10 x as many as Position #1) show that standing firm is truly a teamwork effort, between us and Christ in us. Paul never said, "Jesus did it all, and I had not part, or I'm covered under grace so I'm good regardless"...he had a vital role to play and so do we (1 Cor 9:24-27, 2 Tim 4:7).

Scriptures Supporting Position #3 (Yes, you can lose your salvation)

If John Calvin were alive today, I would say, "John, I know you are passionate about what you believe sir, but please just try to read these and then after each one, say out loud exactly what you believe and taught others."

Try to read each passage and then say out loud, **"Yes, but this doesn't apply to me because I can never fall away from God's irresistible grace or lose my salvation."**

And Mr. Calvin, as you complete this exercise please note how many times you will have to justify why these verses simply don't apply anymore or how many times you will have to desperately re-interpret them to fit with your doctrine of irresistible grace. Perhaps this will help you to see that when your thinking and God's word don't line up, it is our thinking that must be changed, not God's words.

As you read through these, the following words of Jesus will become much more meaningful and quickening to your spirit. It stands in sharp contrast to the "easy believism" taught in much of Christianity today.

But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it. – Mat 7:14 NLT

1. Eze 18:24 "But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die.
2. Eze 33:12 "Therefore, son of man, say to your countrymen, 'The righteousness of the righteous man will not save him when he disobeys, and the wickedness of the wicked man will not cause him to fall when he turns from it. The righteous man, if he sins, will not be allowed to live because of his former righteousness.' 13 If I tell the righteous man that he will surely live, but then he trusts in his righteousness and does evil, **none of the righteous things he has done will be remembered; he will die for the evil he has done.**
 - a. Although this is the only Old Covenant passage I included, people will read this and immediately say, "Yeah, but that's the OT." What they fail to understand is that, the New Testament brings an even higher standard than the Old, not a lower standard. In the New Covenant, we are not just given the command, but we are also given the power (grace from Christ) to actually obey it. This means that we will be held to a higher standard and punished

even more than the people in the OT, if we turn away from righteousness. (See #48 below).

3. Mat 5:22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.
 - a. "brother" means spiritual brother, not blood relative. This is a warning to believers, who can end up in hell, if they remain angry (murder) with their fellow brother or sister in Christ
 - b. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. – 1 John 3:15
4. Mat 5:29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.
 - a. Here we see a passage from the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus is teaching his own disciples (believers) that they can be in danger of hell if they do not eradicate sin from their life. Even after his death and resurrection on the cross, he commands in Mat 28:20 to go teach other believers to obey ALL that He commanded, so in no way did Jesus dying on the cross absolve us from the need to deal drastically with sin in our life. His death on the cross provided forgiveness of past sins (2 Pet 1:9), the power to overcome current sin (Rom 6:6-7), and the mercy for our occasional stumbles into sin (1 Jn 2:1), but NOT for living in sin (1 Jn 1:6-7).
5. Mat 7:19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
 - a. There are four major types of Spiritual fruit:
 - i. Fruit of the lips: Mat 12:34, Heb 13:15
 - ii. Fruit of righteousness and truth: Eph 5:9, Phi 1:9
 - iii. Fruit of good works: Col 1:10
 - iv. Fruit of evangelism: Phi 1:22
6. Mat 10:22 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.
7. Mat 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.
 - a. Again, Jesus is speaking directly to his disciples. Why the need for believers to fear God and hell if we can't lose our salvation?
8. Mat 10:33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.
 - a. An unbeliever cannot disown Jesus, only a believer.
 - b. I believe that this command means denying him FINALLY and completely, not in a stumble or bad moment. Peter, having denied the Lord three times, is an example this. Jesus told him in advance it was going to happen, and the devil was allowed to do this to him to break him from being self-sufficient. He was completely broken and repented deeply. Had he not repented, I believe he would have been lost. God does not show favoritism (Acts 10:35)
9. Mat 10:39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
10. Mat 10:42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."
 - a. This implies that a believer CAN lose their reward. See Mat 25:41-42
11. Mat 11:6 Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."
12. Mat 13:20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and

at once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, **he last only a short time**. When trouble or persecution comes because of the world, **he quickly falls away**.

13. Mat 18:3 And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 6 But **if anyone** causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.
14. Mat 18:33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on **your fellow servant** just as I had on you?' 34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. 35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive **your brother** from your heart."
 - a. This full passage is about a believer who has been forgiven by God, who will end up in hell because even though he was forgiven by God, he didn't forgive others.
15. Mat 21:43 "Therefore I tell you that **the kingdom of God will be taken away from you** and given to a people who will produce its fruit. 44 He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."
 - a. But you say, "Yeah but he's talking to the Jews. See Rom 11:20-23 below.
16. Mat 24:10 At that time **many will turn away from the faith** and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and **deceive many people**. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.
 - a. Many people will fall away from salvation through deception by false teachers.
17. Mat 24:44 So you also must **be ready**, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.
 - a. "Why the need to be ready if you are "in Christ"? What happens if you aren't ready?"
18. Mat 24:46 It will be good for that **servant** (believer) whose master (Jesus) finds him doing so when he returns. 47 I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 **But suppose that servant** is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' 49 and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. 50 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. 51 **He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
 - a. Here is a warning to servants (believers) who will lose their salvation because they were lazy and didn't diligently serve and love others.
19. Mat 25:29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 30 And **throw that worthless servant outside**, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
 - a. A fruitless believer who loses their salvation
20. Mat 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' 44 **"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'** 45 "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' 46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."
 - a. Believers, who call him 'Lord', but still end up in hell because they had faith without works.

21. Luk 12:45 But suppose the **servant** (believer) says to himself, 'My **master** (Jesus) is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. 46 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. **He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.**
- a. Notice Jesus says a "servant" (someone who was a "believer") will be assigned a place in hell with "unbelievers".
22. Joh 15:2,6 **He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit...**6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; **such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.**
- a. These are people who "are in Jesus" (believers) but who bear no fruit. They are worthless servants and they end up thrown into the fire (hell) at Judgment.
23. Act 14:22 strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to **remain true to the faith.** "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.
- a. Why the need to encourage someone to remain "true" to the faith if they can never fall away from it to begin with?
24. Rom 8:13 For **if you live** according to the sinful nature, you will die; **but if by the Spirit** you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.
- a. Paul writes to believers saying they will die if they continue to live by the flesh.
25. Rom 11:22 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.**
26. 1Co 9:27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave **so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.**
- a. Why would Paul be worried about being disqualified and losing his prize of salvation if it weren't possible?
27. 1Co 15:2 By this gospel **you are saved, if you hold firmly** to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

Are you starting to see the truth here?

Are you feeling an increase of the FEAR OF THE LORD?

28. Gal 5:4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; **you have fallen away from grace.**
- a. Here is God's word saying that these people have "fallen away from grace", yet there are pastors that teach this is not possible. Here God is saying these people fell away. Who will you believe?
29. Gal 5:19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. **I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.**
- a. Again, he is warning "believers" not "unbelievers" about not making it to heaven if they live

according to the sin nature.

30. Php 2:12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—**continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling**,
- a. Why the need for ANY fear or ANY trembling if I can never fall away and lose my salvation?
31. Col 1:22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—²³ **IF you continue in your faith**, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.
32. 1Th 3:13 May he strengthen your hearts **so that you will be blameless** and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.
- a. But I thought “belief” in Christ one time made us “blameless”, why the need to be strengthened in our hearts?
33. 1Ti 1:19 holding on to faith and a good conscience. **Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.**
- a. Why the need to hold onto faith and a good conscience if “Jesus DID IT ALL”, and how is it possible to shipwreck your faith if you are in Christ and can never lose it, no matter what?
34. 1Ti 3:13 **Those who have served well** gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.
- a. But I thought “belief” was all we needed for great assurance in Christ.
35. 1Ti 4:16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because **if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.**
- a. The message to believers and pastors is clear here: If I do not watch my life and doctrine closely, and if I do not PERSEVERE in them, it is clear I will not save myself or my hearers, even though I am a “believer”.
36. 1Ti 6:20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, ²¹ which some have professed and in so doing have **wandered from the faith**. Grace be with you.
37. 2Ti 2:11 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him. **If we disown him, he will also disown us;**
38. **Heb 2:1 We must pay more careful attention**, therefore, to what we have heard, **so that we do not drift away.** ² For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³ **how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?**
- a. “But I’m a “believer” and God’s grace is irresistible and I can never fall away, so I don’t have a need to pay careful attention and I will never drift away. I’m once saved, always saved!”
39. Heb 3:6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, **if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.**
- a. “But I’m a believer in Christ and He did it all...I don’t have to hold on to anything!”
40. Heb 3:12 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving **heart that turns away from the living God.**
- a. “But I don’t have to see to anything because I already have a believing heart and I’m saved by

my belief and I could never turn away from God and lose my salvation.”

41. Heb 3:14 We have come to share in Christ **if we hold firmly till the end** the confidence we had at first.
42. Heb 3:19 So we see that they were not able to enter, **because of their unbelief.**
43. Heb 4:1 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, **let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.**
44. Heb 4:11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, **so that no one will fall** by following their example of disobedience.
45. Heb 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold firmly to the faith** we profess.
46. Heb 6:4 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, ⁶ **if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance**, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. ⁷ Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. ⁸ **But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.**
47. **Heb 6:11** We want each of you to **show this same diligence** to the very end, **in order to make your hope sure.** ¹² We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.
48. Heb 10:26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷ but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. ²⁸ Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ **How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?**
49. Heb 10:35 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶ **You need to persevere** so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. ³⁷ For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. ³⁸ But my righteous one will live by faith. **And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.**" ³⁹ But we are not of **those who shrink back and are destroyed**, but of those who believe and are saved.
50. Heb 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ **See to it that no one misses the grace of God** and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.
51. 1Pe 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And, "If it is **hard for the righteous to be saved**, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"
52. 2Pe 1:5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. **For if you do these things, you will never fall,**
 - a. "Again, Michael, I just don't think you get it, "My pastor has assured me that Jesus did it all. It was a free gift of grace to me and I don't bother myself about all this doing stuff. I don't

have to do anything but just “be”. Jesus did it all and I could never fall away from faith.”

53. **2Pe 2:1** But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. **2 Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.**
54. **2Pe 2:20** **If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. 21 It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.**
55. **2Pe 3:11** Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives **12** as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. **13** But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. **14** So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. **16** He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which **ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.** **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.**
- a. Here is a warning about not being carried away from your secure position in Christ. Are you getting the picture? It is harder to be saved than people have been taught. We have to do our part, humbly dependent on his grace, to remain in him. This is why Jesus said, “Strive to enter the narrow gate.” We do have to STRIVE with his help. Don’t let someone lie to you and say, “Jesus does it all.” No, he doesn’t. We have to do our part!!!! Think of all the warnings and admonitions you have seen so far. There is WORK for us to do.
56. **1Jn 2:24** **See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does,** you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. **25** And this is what he promised us—even eternal life.
57. **2Jn 1:8** **Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for,** but that you may be rewarded fully. **9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God;** whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.
58. **Rev 2:5** Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. **If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand** from its place.
59. **Rev 2:7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life,** which is in the paradise of God.
60. **Rev 2:10** Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. **Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.** **11** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. **He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death.**
61. **Rev 3:4** Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.
- a. Jesus is saying there are people in the Sardis church (believers) who have soiled their clothes and the implication is that they are now unworthy to walk with him dressed in white.
62. **Rev 3:5** He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. **I will never blot out his name from the book of life,** but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.
- a. Why would Jesus mention not doing something (blotting out his name), if it were never possible to do to begin with?

63. Rev 3:10 **Since you have kept my command to endure patiently**, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.
64. Rev 22:19 And **if anyone takes words away from this book** of prophecy, **God will take away from him his share in the tree of life** and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Summary:

I believe there are a huge number of professing “Christians” today who are not truly born again, but who have been deceived into thinking they are, simply because they “believed” in their minds (intellectually) that Jesus is the Son of God. They fail to see that we are called to the obedience that comes by faith (Rom 1:5) and that Jesus is the source of salvation for all that obey Him (John 8:51, 14:21, Heb 5:8). I see clearly in Scripture that, **“Yes, I, Michael Chriswell can absolutely lose my future inheritance for salvation, even though I am born again**, by walking away or falling away from faith in Jesus (either through thought or action, by negligence, willful disobedience, deception, unbelief, pride, persecution, fear, worldliness, lifestyle sin, etc.).

I believe it is critical to understand that renouncing faith in Jesus is not limited to those who openly state with their words that they do not believe in him any longer (like Billy Graham’s first partner Charles Templeton who became an agnostic). A person who claims to be a Christian, but who lives and walks in darkness (practicing sin), has walked away from Jesus by their actions, regardless of what they profess with their lips (Tit 1:16).

If a person falls away, only God Himself knows if His Spirit was ever actually in them, but they will certainly have lost what they thought was salvation. However, for a true Spirit filled believer, NO one or NO thing can cause them to lose their salvation except for THEMSELVES, and by all means if we do our part to stand firm in the faith, He is fully willing and fully able to keep us from falling away (Rom 14:4, 2 Cor 1:21, Jude 1:24).

This calls for Christians to be God fearing, trusting, obedient, humble, dependent on our Father as a children, and to practice good spiritual disciplines in fellowship with the Spirit and other godly and mature believers.

The Story of a Weak Christian Who Fell Away

Be faithful even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. – Rev 2:10

From Foxe’s Book of Martyrs we have a striking true story and illustration of the importance of Jesus’s commandment in Revelation 2:10. In around A.D. 250, a weak Christian, Nichomachus, was brought before the governor of Asia, Optimus and ordered to sacrifice to their pagan idols. Nichomachus replied, *“I cannot pay the respect to devils that is due only to the Almighty.”* He was immediately placed on the stretching rack, and after enduring his torments for only a short time, recanted his faith in Christ. As soon as he was freed from the rack, he was seized with great agony and fell to the ground and died (Mat 16:25). Seeing his terrible decision, Denisa, a teenage girl exclaimed, *“O unhappy wretch, why would you buy a moment’s ease at the expense of a miserable eternity!”* When Optimus heard this he called her to himself, and when Denisa confessed she was a Christian, he had her beheaded.

Contrast Nichomachus with Ignatius in A.D. 110, who was the overseer of the church in Antioch. He was sent to Rome to be tried for his faith. He asked the church in Rome not to try to save him from being martyred. He

wrote, *“Now I begin to be a disciple. I care for nothing of visible or invisible things so that I may but win Christ. Let fire and the cross, let the companies of wild beasts, let breaking of bones and tearing of limb, let the grinding of the whole body, and all the malice of the devil, come upon me; be it so, only may I win Christ Jesus.”* Even when he was sentenced to be fed to the lions and could hear their roaring, he was filled with such desire to suffer for Christ (Acts 5:41) that he said, *“I am the wheat of Christ; I am going to be ground with the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread.”*

Perhaps Nichomachus depended on his own strength to sustain the testing of his faith, or perhaps he was not even a true Spirit filled believer. May that never be the case with us, but that we would humbly ask Christ for the dying grace to stand firm with integrity, to the very last breath. I do not like the idea of the pain, but I love the idea of dying for Christ as a Martyr. However, most agree that living for Him can be even tougher than dying for Him, hence why we desperately need His grace (power) either way, so that we ever acknowledge Him and never deny Him in word or lifestyle.