

# Ephesians: What's God Saying to You? What are You Going to Do About It?

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## I. Introduction

What exactly do we have to do to become a Christian; do we have to do certain things or is faith the only condition? And as Christians, is it impossible for us to live in sin? If we do live in sin, how does God respond to our continual sin? Does He disown us? Is there any way for us to lose our eternal salvation?

## II. Ephesians: What is God Saying to You and What are You Going to Do About It?

### Chapter 5

**5:5-6**, this passage sounds like it's saying that those who live in sin will end up in hell. Is this true? Having seen how Ephesians answers such questions, we've been looking at what the rest of the New Testament says about these issues. Does faith mean more than believe? Does a sinful life prove that you're not really saved? Can you lose your eternal salvation?

*Does faith mean more than believe?* Some argue that even though Scripture is crystal clear that the only condition to eternal salvation is faith, they say that "believe" means more than accepting a bunch of facts as true. They say that genuine faith in Christ will produce a changed life and good works, i.e., if you "truly" believed, you will have good works in your life; if you don't, then you're not saved. Therefore, faith means more than believe. Is this true? NO.

**Frist**, God Himself tells you what believe means in the context of receiving eternal salvation: after the apostle Paul preached all day concerning entering the Kingdom of God through simple faith in Jesus, "some were *persuaded* by the things which were spoken, and some *disbelieved*" (Acts 28:23-24). Notice, God uses these words (*believe* and *persuaded*) interchangeably. Thus, to believe is to be persuaded that something is true, nothing more.

**Second**, over and over God adamantly says that eternal salvation is by faith alone apart from works. He makes it crystal clear that salvation is a gift from God's grace and works have NOTHING to do with it. Works cannot be attached to your eternal salvation in any way whatsoever—before, during, or after (**Luke 23:39-43**)—otherwise, your eternal salvation is something you earn and therefore God owes it to you as a debt (Romans 4:3-8; Ephesians 2:8-9).

**Third**, to be eternally saved is to be born again, which happens in an instant (John 5:24). Since when does a person's birth depend on their behavior, their works? Parents don't get to observe their future baby's behavior before they decide to have them. Likewise, after the child is born, parents can't disown the child based on their bad behavior. They can try, but that child will be their child until the day they die. The response is, "No, see, you don't understand. God only produces good babies; He only gives birth to people who produce good works. So if you're a Christian who lives in sin, you prove by your sinful behavior that God didn't give birth to you. You're not truly born-again because God does not produce sinful babies." Anyone familiar with the Bible at all knows that God's children, from cover to cover, can be wicked sinners (e.g., Adam and Eve, Cain and his descendants, Noah's son Ham, Jacob's son Judah, the children of Israel, Sampson, Saul, David, the Corinthians, the Galatians).

Does a sinful life prove you're not really saved and on your way to hell? This too is based on the idea that if you truly believed in Jesus Christ, then you will live a godly life. You may sin occasionally, but if you continue a life of sin, then it proves you were never really saved, that you never "really" believed in Jesus. Is this true? NO.

**First**, the theory is that God the Father can only father good kids. But since when does our behavior prove who our parents are? In fact, the New Testament (and all of Scripture) proves that God's children can be very disobedient. If God's kids will only sin occasionally and not continually, why does God spend so much time telling us not to live in sin (e.g., Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 1 John)? One of the passages used to argue this point is 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; but notice the GIANT problem with this argument from this passage: if God can only produce children who only sin occasionally, why does He say, "Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, no idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God"? That is,

- (1) If God's kids only sin occasionally and will always live a life of good works, then they can never *be* fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, etc., etc. In which case, God is wasting His breath. The warning is meaningless because none of God's children will ever be these wicked things, which leads to the second problem in this argument.
- (2) If God is warning His children, and He is, it means that God's children, the very ones who are "sanctified in Christ Jesus" and "call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord," (1:2) and who have God as their Father (1:3), those very ones are capable of living as fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, etc., otherwise why warn them? This clearly shows us that God's children *are* capable of living in sin, which is why He's warning them against it. In fact, God keeps urging us throughout the entire New Testament not to live in sin. But this should be no surprise; children misbehave and parents are there to ensure that they don't.

**Second**, what's the standard for "continual sin" i.e., how many sins are too many, 10, 20, 30, more? And how frequently is too frequent, per day, per week, per month, more? Where in Scripture is there such a standard? If there is no such standard, then anyone who *thinks* they're sinning too much will live with anxiety and doubt, constantly wondering, "Am I saved?" which is not the way a loving Father would want His children to see their birthright, constantly questioning it.

**Third**, among the Corinthians there was a man who was actually having sex with his stepmother and the Corinthians were bragging about it! Talk about living in sin. Notice what the apostle Paul says about this guy, what he tells the Corinthians to do with him and why, and what ultimately happens with this guy: Paul never tells the Corinthians that he's an unbeliever who should be kicked out of the church until he "really" believes in Jesus. Instead, every step of the way Paul affirms that he's a fellow brother in the Lord, which is why he instructs the Corinthians to discipline him precisely because he's one of them and not an "outsider," 5:12 (1 Corinthians 5:1-13). The Corinthians do as Paul asks them and delivered him "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," 5:5—this is not a reference to salvation from hell, but the day in which the Lord will evaluate this young man to determine whether or not he'll receive rewards, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. And having kicked him out of the church, notice what happens to him and what Paul then asks the Corinthians to do with this repentant brother, 2 Corinthians 2:1-11. Therefore, a sinful life doesn't prove that you're not saved; it proves that you're living in sin and are in need of repentance.

*Is it possible to lose your eternal salvation?* Absolutely NOT.

**First**, sin CANNOT cause you to lose your eternal salvation because Jesus paid for ALL sin (1 John 2:2). So every argument in favor of someone losing their salvation based on sin fails.

**Second**, God says that once you're born again, there's NO WAY for you to lose your salvation and He says it in many different ways: you will NOT face the Final Judgment (John 5:24). The second you believe in Jesus, He gives you everlasting life; everlasting means it lasts FOREVER (John 6:47). You're in Jesus' grip and the Father's grip and no one can remove you from their hands (John 10:27-30). God is for you so NO ONE can be against you, NO ONE can bring a charge against you because God has declared you righteous, Jesus died for your sins and intercedes on your behalf, therefore, nothing, and I mean NOTHING! can separate you from God (Romans 8:31-39). Even if we fail to serve God in this lifetime, we still won't lose our salvation. Put another way, we're supposed to live for God not ourselves. To live for self is to live in the sin of selfishness. But even then, we cannot lose our salvation (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Why? Because in order for us to lose our salvation, Jesus would have to disown Himself and that is something He CANNOT do (2 Timothy 2:13). He is not about to cut off a part of Himself—the moment we believe in Him, we become a permanent part of His Body (Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:5-6; 4:1-24).

**Third**, human birth is impossible to undo. As impossible as that is, our spiritual birth is a trillion times more impossible to undo because it is God who gives birth to us (James 1:18). Ever wonder why God used "birth" as the process by which He makes us His children? It wasn't inconsequential or accidental. God made a conscious choice to use this process because He wanted us to understand that He is our Father and we are His children (John 1:12), which implies permanence, which implies unconditional love, which implies security no matter our sinfulness: the Prodigal Son, what does the Father do with the prodigal son who absolutely and completely lived in sin? Does he say, "Your sin proves that you were never really my son." No, instead, because he *is* his son and will *always be* his son no matter what he does, the father rejoiced at his son's return (Luke 15:11-24). And this brings us to another point: some believe that people who live in abominable sins like homosexuality cannot go to heaven. Question: if John Doe declares that he's gay, marries another man, becomes part of the gay rights movement and remains in that life, is he still his parents' son? That's the question concerning EVERY Christian living in sin, gay or otherwise. That is, can ANY sin take your spiritual birth away? NO! Once God's child, always God's child. Don't confuse birth with life after you're born. Your behavior after you're born can't touch your birth, it can't undo it. No matter how badly Joe behaves, he will ALWAYS be his parents' child. NOTHING can ever undo that. Well, it's that way and more when it comes to us and God (2 Timothy 2:13).

**What is God saying when He says that He'll never disown us?** He's saying, "My Son gave up His life in order to give you life and the moment you believed in Him you became My child. Undoubtedly you will fail Me, perhaps even miserably, but I want you to understand that no matter what you do, I will never disown you. I may discipline you, even severely, but I will never disown you."

### III. Conclusion

*If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*