

**Eternal Security**  
**:Does the Bible Teach Eternal Security?**

by Dr. W.E. Nunnally

**Introduction**

In a previous article, I briefly discussed the doctrinal position of perseverance of the saints, eternal security, or, once saved, always saved.<sup>1</sup> Here, however, I will address it more completely.

The doctrine of eternal security teaches that once a person experiences salvation, nothing can cause him to lose that status. Millard J. Erickson states: “The Calvinist position is both clear and forthright on this matter: ‘They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved’ ” (Westminster Confession of Faith 17.1).<sup>2</sup>

Henry C. Thiessen further states: “Concerning such it affirms that they shall ‘never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace.’ This is not equivalent to saying that they shall never backslide, never fall into sin, and never fail to show forth the praises of Him Who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. It merely means that they will never totally fall away from the state of grace into which they have been brought, nor fail to return from their backsliding in the end.”<sup>3</sup>

Like limited atonement, Augustine popularized the doctrine of perseverance of the saints in the fifth century A.D. The Roman Catholic Church eventually adopted his teaching on this subject as official doctrine. It was the commonly accepted position at the time of the Protestant Reformation. Leaders of the Reformation, such as John Calvin, also accepted and promoted it along with a number of other pre-Reformational Roman Catholic doctrines and practices. In this way, eternal security has come down into the doctrinal systems of many modern Protestant denominations today.

The Arminian/Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, and the Assemblies of God that grew out of it, have both historically rejected the belief in eternal security. The official AG Web site states, “The Assemblies of God has taken a stand against the teaching that God’s sovereign will completely overrides man’s free will to accept and serve Him. In view of this we believe it is possible for a person once saved to turn from God and be lost again.”<sup>4</sup>

Even though the Assemblies of God has taken a strong and unequivocal official position, our people may not understand this doctrine or our position on this issue. People in our congregations often work with people who believe in eternal security. They need to know how to respond to the beliefs of their coworkers. Therefore, it is important for pastors to teach the arguments used by proponents of perseverance of the saints/eternal security, the appropriate responses to their assertions, and the biblical basis for our position: Believers can voluntarily forfeit their salvation by turning away from the lordship of Christ.

There are, to be sure, varying beliefs concerning eternal security within Calvinism. For example, one extreme view argues that God will take a believer home because he will not straighten out his life and he has become an embarrassment to God. Others who believe in eternal security, however, do not believe that eternal security gives license to sin: “On the other hand, however, our understanding of the doctrine of perseverance allows no room for indolence or laxity. It is questionable whether anyone who reasons, ‘Now that I am a Christian, I can live as I please,’ has really been converted and regenerated. Genuine faith issues, instead, in the fruit of the Spirit.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Scriptures Used in Support of PS/ES and Their Proper Interpretation**

Those who espouse the PS/ES view of salvation often refer to John 5:24 to support their position, “He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”<sup>6</sup> Proponents believe this verse means once you have passed from death to life, you eternally have life. The grammatical context of this verse, however, makes clear that the word eternal is not an adverb modifying the verb, as if to say one eternally has life. Instead, it is part of a compound noun. Therefore, the life is eternal, not one’s possession of it. Also, the words hearing and believing are in the present tense, meaning continuous action.

Proponents also argue that once a person and God unite, that bond can never be broken. They appeal to John 6:37, “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.” We cannot say, however, that this text rules out the possibility that one can choose to leave (compare John 17:12).

John 10:27,28 is also used to support PS/ES: “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.” To these verses we could add Romans 8:35,39, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?... 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.” But the biblical authors are saying that external forces are incapable of separating us from God. Neither rule out the possibility that a person can exercise free will and choose to depart.

It should also be noted that the present tense in Greek denotes continuous action. This verse is literally translated, “My sheep continue in hearing my voice, and I continue to know them, and they keep on following me and I keep on giving them eternal life.” This means that our not perishing is contingent on our continuing to hear and follow Jesus, a theme that echoes throughout Scripture. Instead of supporting PS/ES, this text supports the possibility that a believer can walk away from God by refusing to continue in obedience to Christ.

Using John 15:1–11, these proponents state: “If believers have been made one with Christ and his life flows through them (John 15:1–11), nothing can conceivably nullify that connection.”<sup>7</sup> But the entire 15th chapter shows the possibility that this connection can be broken.

The word translated abide throughout chapter 15 is *meno*, meaning “to remain, continue, stay.” Therefore, Jesus says, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away. . . . If anyone does not abide [continue, stay] in me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:2,6). The next section begins with Jesus declaring, “I have spoken to you, that you may be kept from stumbling” (John 16:1). If turning away from God were not a distinct possibility, Jesus would not have addressed it at such length.

Some adherents of PS/ES point to Paul’s words in Philippians 1:6 for support, “I am confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” In reading verses 1–11, however, it becomes clear that what Paul was confident of was the Philippians’ desire to press on to maturity — the believer’s only real security. This is supported by Paul’s later admonition to the Philippians to “work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling” (2:12). Furthermore, after noting that even his own eternal destiny was not yet written in stone (3:12,13), and to ensure his own eternal life, Paul was pressing on to greater maturity and obedience (3:14). He exhorted the Christians at Philippi to follow his example and avoid following the examples of those whose end is destruction (3:17–19).

People sometimes appeal to Hebrews 7:25, “He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” Advocates understand the word “forever” to refer to those drawing near to God for salvation. The immediate context, however, and the overarching message of the Book of Hebrews requires the phrase to refer to Jesus and the length of time He, as High Priest, is able to provide atonement that makes salvation possible (compare also verses 3,17,21,24,25; 5:6; 6:20), not to the perceived eternal security of the believer.

A favorite text of those who embrace PS/ES is 1 John 2:19, “They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.” Advocates use this passage to claim that those who cease to follow Christ never had experienced salvation. There are several things we need to examine in this verse.

First, the text does not explicitly state what proponents of PS/ES assert it says (that separation means their salvation was not real). John was writing after their defection and noting that their desertion was proof that they no longer belonged to the community of the redeemed. He was comparing them to those who had resisted false teaching, continued to embrace the truth, and persisted in abiding in Christ (verse 24).

Second, the contrasting responses of going out and abiding/remaining recall Jesus’ own teaching in John 15, where He described members of the body of Christ who fail to “abide,” do not continue to bear fruit, dry up, and are eventually cut off.

Third, both Testaments are replete with examples of people and groups who were, at one point, clearly in right standing with God but later repudiated His lordship (Genesis 4:3–

16 [compare Jude 11]; Exodus 32:32,33; Numbers 3:2-4; 4:15-20; 16:1-33; 22:8,12,19,20,32-35; 24:1,2,13; 31:7,8; 1 Samuel 10:1-7,9-11; 13:8-15; 16:14; 31; John 6:66 [compare verse 67]; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 1 Timothy 1:19,20; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:17,18; 4:10; Titus 1:12-16; Hebrews 12:15-17; 2 Peter 2:1; Revelation 2:6,15 [compare Acts 6:5; Eusebius Ecclesiastical History 3.29], 20).

#### Arguments That Warn Believers of the Possibility of Apostasy

Sometimes those in the Arminian camp have not clearly articulated their doctrinal position. We have used the phrase lose your salvation, as though such an act could be accidental, unintentional, and the result of a momentary slipup. Detractors have rightly attacked this phrase as an inaccurate reflection of Scripture. Therefore, we must refamiliarize ourselves with passages that support our doctrine, and then articulate it in a way that properly reflects the teaching of God's Word.

Arminian/Wesleyan/Holiness/Pentecostal teaching maintains that believers retain their free will even after salvation. Scripture teaches that those who trust in and obey Jesus are even more free after salvation than before (John 8:36; Galatians 5:1,13), not less. Our doctrine can be described by the biblical phrases "fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4), "falling away" (Hebrews 3:12), and "fallen away" (Hebrews 6:6).

J. Rodman Williams states: "But, because of the fact that the salvation of God operates through faith — a faith that is living — the forsaking of that faith can lead to apostasy. By failing to abide in Christ, to continue in Him and His word, to persevere in the midst of worldly trial or temptation, to make faith firm and strengthen it — thereby allowing unbelief to enter — believers may fall away from God. Thereby they may tragically forfeit their salvation."<sup>8</sup> (See sidebar, Steps Leading to Apostasy.)

The English word apostasy is a transliteration of the New Testament Greek word apostasia. Reference works note that it and its verbal form include these nuances: to take a stand apart from, to commit political defection or treason, to separate from, to be drawn off or away, to induce revolt, to withdraw, to depart, to fall away, to cease from having any interaction with, to desert, and to put away (as in divorce). None of these phrases suggest a loss of covenant as the result of an accidental or temporary breach of established standards of holiness. Instead, they all imply forethought, intent, and a persistent state of rebellion against the mastery of Jesus over one's life. (See sidebar, Apostasy.)

#### **Free Will**

God created man in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). In part, this means that even as God thinks, plans, reasons, and decides, so also does man. Although the Fall partially effaced the image of God stamped on mankind at creation, these other attributes certainly were not. In addition, God will not invade or violate the free will that He has purposely created within man, whether he accepts Christ or not.

In the Old Testament, God dealt with the Israelites almost exclusively through conditional covenants. God continually warned them to fulfill their covenantal

obligations or their relationship with Him would be nullified (compare Exodus 32:33; Leviticus 22:3; Numbers 15:27–31; Deuteronomy 29:18–21; 1 Kings 9:6,7; 2 Kings 17:22,23; 24:20; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 7:19–22; 15:2; 24:20; Psalm 69:28; Isaiah 1:2–4; 59:2; Jeremiah 2:19; 5:3,6,7; 8:5,12; 15:1,6,7; 16:5; Ezekiel 3:20; 18:12,13; 33:12). Grace was available in the Old Testament (Exodus 34:6; Numbers 6:25; Jeremiah 3:12), but as in the New Testament, grace was never an excuse to continue in sin and never lessened the demands of the covenant (compare John 1:16,17; Romans 6:1,2; 8:7–11; Luke 12:48; compare also Romans 1:31, “faithless” or “covenant-breakers,” KJV).

### **The Gospels**

John the Baptist boldly proclaimed, “Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matthew 3:10; Luke 3:9). In fact, Jesus began His ministry by reiterating this same message (Matthew 7:19).

Jesus also taught that if we are unwilling to forgive, we remove the possibility of our receiving God’s forgiveness (Matthew 6:15). In Jesus’ original historical context and in Matthew’s canonical context, the new covenant community — comprised of believers — Jesus said that only those who endure to the end will be saved (Matthew 10:22; 24:13), and that if we deny Him before men, He will deny us before His Father (Matthew 10:33). When He said, “Any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven” (Matthew 12:31), He made no distinction between the saved and the unsaved.

In the Parable of the Sower and the Seed, the seed took root and began to bear fruit, but various circumstances eventually destroyed it (Matthew 13:3–23). In Matthew 18:15–17, Jesus commanded that members of the new covenant community who persisted in unrepentance be put out of the church and treated as outsiders to the covenant. Jesus also warned that in the last times, false messiahs “will mislead many” (Matthew 24:5), and during persecution, “many will fall away” (Matthew 24:10). Verse 24 records Jesus’ teaching that false messiahs and false prophets will “mislead, if possible, even the elect.”

Advocates of PS/ES think the phrase “if possible” points to a hypothetical situation and shows it is not possible for anyone to stray from the faith. This argument, however, does not consider the larger context (Matthew 24:5,10) or other texts (1 Thessalonians 4:1,2) that clearly state that some believers in the last days will depart from the faith for various reasons.

Luke reported that Jesus taught, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and [continually] looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). The context makes the meaning of the metaphor clear. The same can be said for Luke 14:34,35, “Salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (for more on the teaching of Jesus, see Matthew 7:16,17,21,24,26; 10:38; 12:30; 18:23–35; Luke 9:23 and following; 14:25–33).

### **Pauline teaching**

On the mission field, after they had “made many disciples,” Paul and Barnabas returned to the churches they had planted earlier, “strengthening the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith” (Acts 14:21,22). This would have been an unnecessary expenditure of time and energy if apostasy was not an option. Later, Paul warned the leaders of the church in Ephesus that “savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:29,30).

In Paul’s letters, his teaching was no different than in his preaching in Acts. He warned the churches in Rome, “For if God did not spare the natural branches, [Israel], He will not spare you either [Christians in Rome]. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; severity to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness [note the language of conditional covenant] if you continue in His kindness; otherwise, you also will be cut off” (11:21,22). He also challenged them, “If because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died” (14:15; compare also 1 Corinthians 8:11, where the same terms appear).

In 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 (compare also 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14), Paul challenged the Corinthians to excommunicate people who live in sin (compare Matthew 18:15–17). He chided libertines in the church at Corinth for allowing their freedom to cause the destruction of the weaker “brother for whose sake Christ died” (1 Corinthians 8:11). “Brother” indicates that all involved are members of the same covenant community). He believed there was a possibility that even he could become a castaway from the faith (1 Corinthians 9:27). Paul further warned the Christians at Corinth that this could be their lot as well, and that they could end up like the Israelites who died in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:1–13). “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall” (verse 12).

Paul also warned the Corinthians that belief in a defective version of the good news could endanger their salvation, “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:1,2). Later, he challenged them again, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you — unless indeed you fail the test!” (2 Corinthians 13:5). This challenge is similar to the one he delivered to the Colossian church: Jesus would present them blameless before God, but only provided that [they] “continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast” (Colossians 1:21–23).

To the churches in Galatia, Paul exclaimed, “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel” (Galatians 1:6). In Galatians 4:1–11, he described a progression in which the Galatian Christians had gone from slaves, to sons, and then back to slaves again. In the conclusion of this section, Paul said, “I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.”

To those who had been saved by the blood of Jesus, but then accepted the Jesus-plus gospel of the Judaizers that added circumcision to the Ordo Salutis (way of salvation), Paul proclaimed, “You have been severed [kataergo: “cut off, emptied of, annulled from, canceled from, brought to an end, destroyed, annihilated”] from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen [ekpipto: “to fall from or out of, to forfeit, to lose, to cause to come to an end”] from grace” (Galatians 5:4).

To the Philippian church, Paul stated that he had suffered the loss of all things “that I may know him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:10,11). If Paul’s salvation was final and nothing could change his status with God, he was not aware of it. He had taken to heart the spiritual devastation in the lives of some of his closest companions because, in the same context, he told the church at Philippi about people who once were well-known believers, but he lamented “they are enemies of the cross of Christ” (Philippians 3:18).

When Paul instructed pastors, the message was the same, “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith” (1 Timothy 4:1; compare 2 Timothy 4:3,4).

### **The general epistles and the Apocalypse**

The remainder of the New Testament is also clear about the fact a believer can voluntarily forfeit his salvation. The Book of Hebrews contains some of the clearest warnings against apostasy and also urgent exhortations to remain firm to the end — all directed toward Christians.

Because of the greater revelation that came with the incarnation of Christ, the author of Hebrews told Christians, “We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it” (2:1). In this text, the writer included himself in a warning against leaving the way of salvation. In the same context, he raised the rhetorical question, “How will we escape [judgment, compare verse 2] if we neglect so great a salvation?” (verse 3). Again, the author included himself along with his Christian audience.

We should note that the verb is neglect, not reject. His readers were neglectful Christians, not rejecting unbelievers. In 3:6, he echoed the same challenge heard from Jesus and Paul: And we are His “house ... if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.” He reiterated later, “We have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end” (verse 14). He warned fellow believers, “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away [apostaenai, “apostasize”] from the living God” (3:12, emphasis added). Believers need to “fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, anyone of you may seem to have come short of it” (4:1), because even believers can “fall, through following the same example of disobedience [that covenant Israel exhibited]” (4:11).

In 6:4–6, the author declared: “Those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 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” (emphasis added).

Reminiscent of Numbers 15:30,31, Hebrews states: “For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment” (10:26,27, emphasis added). He continues, “Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 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?” (10:28,29, emphasis added). The italicized portion of these verses provides incontrovertible evidence that the audience is Christian. These believers are warned not to “throw away” (as opposed to “accidentally lose”) their salvation (10:35).

The writer of Hebrews left his Christian audience with this exhortation, “See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness [compare Deuteronomy 29:18–21] springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears” (Hebrews 12:15–17).

James tells us: “If any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death” (James 5:19,20).

Peter writes, “There will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.” (2 Peter 2:1). In the same context he continued, “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. 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. 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’ ” (2 Peter 2:20–22, emphases added to demonstrate the fact the author is describing people who had previously been numbered among the redeemed).

John described a sin that is “leading to death” that cannot be forgiven (1 John 5:16). The context in the first half of the verse as well as the use of the same terminology elsewhere in this letter (1 John 3:13,14) make it clear that this is spiritual death, not physical death. This message is no different from his message in the Apocalypse. There, he promised eternal life only to those who overcome and remain faithful until the end (Revelation

2:10,25,26). On the other hand, he guaranteed rejection and loss of life to those who do not (Revelation 2:5; 3:11,16). To the end of the book (and thus, the New Testament), he continued to warn about the possibility of forfeiture of one's salvation (Revelation 22:19).

### **Conclusion**

It is evident that the Bible warns against the possibility of forfeiture of one's status with God. Scripture is clear that a believer's only security is in consistent obedience to the will of the Master. This reality fits perfectly with the biblical definition of salvation. Salvation is not a one-time crisis event that seals a believer for all eternity, but a process that has past (Romans 10:9,10; 2 Corinthians 5:17), present (Luke 9:23; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15; 3:18; Philippians 2:12; 3:8–16), and future stages (Romans 8:19–24; 1 Corinthians 15:24–28; 1 Peter 1:3–7; Revelation 12:10; 20:1–10; 21:1 through 22:14). Believers retain the option to choose a life of obedience and submission to the will of God or to walk away from a relationship with God and suffer(ed) eternal separation from God as a result. By teaching your people this truth, you can encourage them live godly lives and respond to those who believe in eternal security.



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### *Endnotes*

1. W.E. Nunnally, "Defective Views of Salvation," *Enrichment journal* 13, no. 3 (Summer 2008):128–135.
2. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 998.
3. Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 385.
4. "Security of the Believer (Backsliding)," available from [http://www.ag.org/top/Beliefs/gendoct\\_09\\_security.cfm](http://www.ag.org/top/Beliefs/gendoct_09_security.cfm); accessed February 15, 2008.
5. Erickson, 1007.
6. Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Bible®®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission (<http://www.Lockman.org>).
7. Erickson, 999.

8. J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology*, vol. 2. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 1990), 131.

### **Further Explanation:**

***Apostasy***: To apostasize means to sever one's saving relationship with Christ or to withdraw from vital union with and true faith in Him. Thus, individual apostasy is possible only for those who have first experienced salvation, regeneration, and renewal through the Holy Spirit (Luke 8:13; Hebrews 6:4,5); it is not a mere denial of New Testament doctrine by the unsaved within the visible church. Apostasy may involve two separate, though related, aspects: (a) theological apostasy, i.e., a rejection of all or some of the original teachings of Christ and the apostles (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:3), and (b) moral apostasy, i.e., the former believer ceases to remain in Christ and instead becomes enslaved again to sin and immorality (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 23:25-28; Romans 6:15-23; 8:6-13).

### **Steps Leading to Apostasy**

1. Believers, through unbelief, fail to take the truths, exhortations, warnings, promises, and teachings of God's Word with utmost seriousness (Mark 1:15; Luke 8:13; John 5:44,47; 8:46).

2. As the realities of the world become greater than the realities of God's heavenly kingdom, believers gradually cease to draw near to God through Christ (Hebrews 4:16; 7:19,25; 11:6).

3. Through the deceitfulness of sin, they become increasingly tolerant of sin in their own lives (1 Corinthians 6:9,10; Ephesians 5:5; Hebrews 3:13). They no longer love righteousness and hate wickedness.

4. Through hardness of heart (Hebrews 3:8,13) and rejecting God's way (3:10), they ignore the repeated voice and rebuke of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22).

5. The Holy Spirit is grieved (Ephesians 4:30; cf. Hebrews 3:7,8) and His fire put out (1 Thessalonians 5:19), and His temple violated (1 Corinthians 3:16). He eventually departs from the former believers (Judges 16:20; Psalm 51:11; Romans 8:13; 1 Corinthians 3:16,17; Hebrews 3:14).

Donald Stamps, Gen. Ed. *Life in the Spirit Study Bible*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 1918.