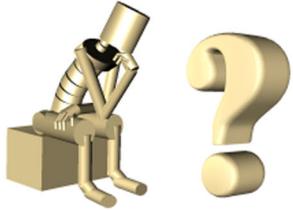


Questions & Answers



From
Living Springs Institute

Question #5 - *“Can a Christian ever lose their salvation?”*

The answer to this question all depends on one thing, what do you mean by “salvation”? The bottom line is simply this, each human has to decide if they want to know the God who created them or not. God created us with such a free will that even the decision to have or not have a relationship with Him is up to us. When we decide we believe there is a God, and we want to have a relationship with Him, we must understand that we still have the ability to change our mind at anytime. Just as God does not make us have a relationship with Him, He does not make us stay in that relationship. So, our walk with God can be lost just like our friendship with a human.

We can lose our relationship by specifically deciding we no longer want it, or we may simply lose it because we no longer care enough to maintain it! The maintaining it part is never God's fault. He is always there for us and waiting for us to take the time to be with Him. He has promised, He will never leave us nor forsake us. (Heb. 13:5) So, it is always our choices that make the difference. Do we want to

talk to Him and commune with Him or is there always something better to do? The only way God will reject a relationship with us is if we purposely commit the one sin Jesus tells us will not be forgiven us, and that is the blaspheming of The Holy Ghost. (Matt. 12:30-33) This is a choice. It must be done intentionally, and some have decided they do not want God in their lives, to the extent, they have chosen to cross this line. So, as we live on this earth, our options are wide open, and God is forcing nothing on us!

The problem is, we have been misled by many false doctrines which have arisen in our churches over the centuries. We do not see the issue of salvation in its proper context. We have come to believe, in most Christian circles, that we are to come to a point where we specifically say a sinner's prayer. Then we are taught, at that point we are “saved.” In many churches this is simply a miss use of terms. Many Christians do believe you can fall away from God, but we should have our theology in a more proper place. The issue of saying we are “saved” is getting more and more distorted as the generations go by. People come up with all kinds of ideas which drag them off course with the Bible and what it truly tells us. Many believe in what I like to call the “Magical Ticket” theology. They believe by saying the sinner's prayer or something along those lines, they have completed a formula. They believe if you complete the formula correctly, it is as if you receive a magical ticket to heaven. Some carry this theology so far, they will even tell you the “sinner's prayer” is the first prayer God ever hears you say. This is such a terrible thing to think! We need to realize God is not some closed off, distant God. He is all knowing and all seeing. He hears every word you speak, and He is waiting for you to acknowledge His presence in your life. If God had not loved us first, we would have no idea how to come to Him. (1 Jn. 4) The Bible tells us faith is the gift of God. (Eph. 2:8) It tells us God knows us from our mother's womb; and the Psalmist tells us, God was his God, from his mother's womb! (Ps. 22:9-10, Gal. 1:14-17) We are born knowing God. It is we who truly decide to walk away in the first place!

God is waiting for us to say that first prayer when we acknowledge His existence and our realization that we have sinned, thus we need Him. However, this is a decision to set your feet on a path which we

must then daily choose to walk! Straight is the way and narrow is the path which leads to life everlasting. (Matt. 7:13-14) When most talk about being "saved," they talk about it as if we have somehow made the transition talked about by Paul in I Corinthians 15:42-57, where this corruptible has taken on incorruption. There is no mistranslation in these verses, they simply mean what they say. In the here and now we are corruptible, meaning we are capable of being corrupted. If we are going to live with God for eternity, we must be changed to incorruptible or take on incorruptibility. So, we can believe in God, walk with Him daily, and say we want to always be with Him, but this does not keep our physical forms from dying!

The fact we still face death is the telltale sign we are not yet saved. This very fact concerned many in the early church, and they asked Paul about it. Paul simply told them the living will not prevent the dead, but the dead in Christ will rise first, and then we which are alive and remain will be caught up to meet Him in the air. (I Thes. 4:15-17) In I Corinthians 15, he tells the church even those of us who are alive in these sinful fleshly bodies will not stay the same, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump! Paul is not teaching some newfangled theology in these verses. He is simply pointing out, when Jesus returns to set His feet on the Mount of Olives, (Acts 1:9-12, Zech. 14) He will also collect all those who have chosen to serve Him, whether alive or dead. They will be given new bodies which are incorruptible, and from then on, they will always be with The Lord. This will truly be salvation, and once we have been given our incorruptible bodies, we will never be able to lose them. This is why God wants us to come to Him. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. It is not God's will that a single human not come to live with Him forever, but we have a will as well. So, we have to come to repentance; and again, this is a big commitment, one we must choose. God is not going to force us to live with Him for eternity; thus, He will only grant salvation to those who truly want it. This means, what we want can't just be heaven because it sounds better than hell. We must desire to be with God. Heaven is the place Jesus left this earth to prepare for us, that where He is, there we may be also. (John

14:1-4) Hell is a place prepared for the devil and those angels who followed him. Hell is a place where God will not be. So, it simply matters what we want. This life is the chance to see if God is what you want. Eternity is a big commitment!

Let's look at your question using a different term used in the Bible. Many Christians will tell you once you say the sinners prayer, you are "born again"! This is also not really the proper use of a term. This term comes from the story of Nicodemus talking to Jesus. You should take the time to stop and read that story now. It is found in John 3:1-21. Here Nicodemus is talking about the fact that, in the matter of death, there seems to be no difference, through the years, between those who serve God and those who do not. He is asking, how can anyone be saved from the loss of these physical forms? Jesus' answer is not that the true believer will not die. Jesus' answer is that we must be born again! Now, understand this is where a great deal of false teaching and misunderstanding comes in again. When many ministers teach on this subject, they will tell you this "born again" idea is about our spirit not our flesh. They will tell you, when you make that first commitment to God, your spirit - which they say is dead - is then born. This is totally wrong! Jesus is literally talking about the need to shed this sinful, corruptible flesh. Nicodemus was not the ignorant one many tell us he was. Nicodemus is right on the same track with what Jesus is talking about in many ways; most believers today are not. However, he couldn't figure out how the flesh could be reborn. Thus, he asks the logical question, how can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born again? Nicodemus was asking how a person could possibly receive a new physical form, when being born of a woman is the only way Nicodemus could think that a person could have a fresh start. Jesus answered this question somewhat poetically. Jesus tells Nicodemus not to "marvel" at what He was telling him. Jesus says the wind blows, and we hear its sound. However, we do not really understand where it comes from and where it goes. Scientist today will tell us they understand much more about the wind, but they still don't really know why it does what it does. This fact is testified by the fact we still have a very hard time knowing anything about what the weather will be like!



What Jesus was telling Nicodemus is, when you were born from your mother's womb, you were born by the will of your parents. This was a human decision of the flesh. If we are going to have life eternal, we must be born of spirit. When he says "spirit" here, Jesus is not referring to the birth of our spirit. The fact we have a mind and spirit that will be left without a physical form after we die, is the whole problem Nicodemus was concerned about. Here, Jesus is telling us we must be born of God. (In I Cor. 15:44-49, Paul explains this in detail.) Jesus was talking about the transition only God can grant from corruptible to incorruptible. Nicodemus still couldn't figure out how this could be, because he did not understand that God can do things we can't even imagine or think. (Eph. 3:20-21) In verse 12, Jesus asks the question, if we can not believe something like God's ability to transition our flesh, how can we believe God has things which we need, far beyond that simple first step? In verse 13, Jesus tells us "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven,..." Jesus is referring to Himself. Jesus goes on to tell us the work He came to do so that it might be possible for us to share in that experience. Jesus explains what I just explained above. We must choose. Do we love darkness or do we love light? If we love light, we will come to a place of repentance. We will seek to change our ways by knowing the ways of God. This is why the base commandments for how to live our lives are, to love God with everything we have and to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Matt. 22:35-40) Whether true darkness or light is what we desire, will be shown in our actions.

Let's look at some other scriptures. The Bible says if we come to God, we must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them which diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:6) Again, we must first accept God exists, then we must believe God has the power to save us from the death we all face! This is why the Bible tells us we are saved by grace. Many get this wrong as well. They tell us we are saved by faith, but Ephesians 2:8 tells us we are saved by grace. If it was not for the fact God loves us and desires none of us love darkness rather than light, there would be no plan of salvation! Jesus came and gave His life for us because of the love of God. God offers salvation to all, because He is a God of grace. No matter what

mistakes we have made in life, there is still salvation thru Jesus Christ. So, the scripture tells us, we are saved by grace through faith. What does that mean? Well, God, being gracious, offers salvation to all, but what does God ask of us? The answer is faith!

This brings us to yet another point of confusion among many believers. Many look at faith as simply belief. They tell you what you can not see, you accept by faith. What they say is not wrong, it's what they mean! They mean that what we can not see, we simply accept anyway with nothing to back it up. They tell us this is faith. This is not faith. Paul tells us in Hebrews 11:1 that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. The most simple definition of faith is a relationship with God! As we grow in the grace and knowledge of God, we find there are things that exist which in these present forms we can not see or touch, but they exist nonetheless! We find that tangible things are not the only things our life is about. This fact is why scripture tells us not to be so focused on the flesh. The flesh is the part of us that will die. There is no profit in it. (John 6:63) This is why things like fasting should be a part of every believer's life. We need to keep this flesh under submission, or it will blind us from the things of God. If we give the flesh everything it wants, we will never have growth in faith. Again, we are back to the choice! Do we want this life and world, or God? (Matt. 10:38-39) If we want God, He is waiting to have a relationship with us. So, faith, being a relationship with God, means if we have faith, it is truly the substance of what we hope to have eternally and the evidence that such a relationship is possible! Again, Ephesians 2:8 tells us, this faith or relationship with God, even though we can not see or touch Him, is not something we develop on our own, it is the gift of God. When we come to God or say that sinner's prayer, this is really what we have come to receive: a deep and meaningful relationship which God is readily willing to give and grow!

Paul explains in Romans chapter 4, Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. In verse 5 he tells us Abraham's faith is counted for righteousness. Abraham had a relationship with God. Now, Abraham was not a perfect man, and he could not make up for the

mistakes he had made in his life. However, Abraham believed if he cried unto God, God would take care of this fact. Abraham was right! Abraham continued in his relationship with God, growing and learning everyday. He understood he could never earn his salvation, but he loved God and longed to commune with God. God loved Abraham and longed to commune with him. So, Abraham walked in a relationship with God even knowing that he (Abraham) would die someday for his sins. Why would Abraham not just live it up and not care about what God wanted? If he couldn't make up for the fact he was not perfect, why would he waste time, he could have spent enjoying the things of the flesh, trying to walk with God? The answer is given to us in Genesis 22.

God had asked Abraham to give up his son. Abraham loved God so much he was willing to do even this! As Abraham and his son walked up to the place where the sacrifice would take place, Abraham's son said he saw the fire, the wood, and all the provisions to give a sacrifice to God, but he did not see a sacrifice. Abraham's statement in response to this is something which we should never forget! Abraham said, "God will provide himself a lamb!" Abraham knew even the sacrifice of his son would not gain him salvation. He understood sacrificing was only a symbol of what God would do for us, and only God's sacrifice would ultimately save us. This understanding, through his relationship with God, and Abraham's firm belief God would someday provide, not just a lamb, but "Himself a lamb," is what was counted to him for righteousness. Abraham knew God would not let death end the relationship they had!

Today, we live much the same. The only real difference is that we live on the other side of the cross. Jesus was that Lamb. He has come and sacrificed Himself for our sin. Abraham believed God would provide a lamb and we believe God has provided that Lamb. The biggest difference is in the fact we know the name of that Lamb, and are told to confess the name of Jesus. This is for very simple reasons. Outside of those who do not care that The God who created them sacrificed Himself to provide eternal life, there only exists two reasons for not proclaiming the name of Jesus. First, we may have

never heard the "good news" or gospel, which is that God has provided Himself a Lamb and His name is Jesus! The second reason can be that we do not believe Jesus is that Lamb! Jesus said, His sheep know His voice. (John 10:14-30) If we have faith in God, we will come to the understanding that Jesus was and is The Lamb slain for our sin; and again, the choice is ours!

This understanding of the true nature of our walk with God clears away many of the arguments people use to support theologies like eternal security. People who believe this, do not believe you can miss heaven once you've confessed your sins and became a "Christian." What we need to understand is that we are not saved or born again as of yet. We are not perfect. Our righteousnesses are still as filthy rags. (Isa. 64:6) It is only our desire to have a continual relationship with God that will lead to our salvation. Yes, Romans 8:38-39 tells us that nothing will separate us from the love of God, and that is still true. God loves us always! Again, it's not His will that any perish, but that all come to repentance. (II Pet. 3:9) If we never choose to come to that place, God still loves us. His love is why He opened the door of salvation, even though it caused Jesus to go through the cross. However, it's also His love that allows us to make our own choices, just as He created us to!

Some will ask what the Bible means when it says, we become a new creature? (II Cor. 5:17) This is simple as well. When we do not know The Lord and have a relationship with Him, then the things of this world is all we know. When we yield to that little voice or measure of faith, which God has given to everyone of us, we will find God is ready and able to change our lives. To open our eyes to the ways He intended us to live, instead of the ways of the world. We no longer live in the idea that what this life has to offer is all there is. We find there is so much more with God, that the things of this world grow unimportant to us. We see everything differently than before. Our entire world shifts, and truly a new life begins. This is the gift of God!

So, if calling unto God is really what we have done, the process of change in our life will move as fast as we are able and willing to yield up each part of our lives to Him. We do not have to wait for

heaven to serve and know The Lord. We can live in the knowledge that death is only a transition, not an end, as it is for those who do not serve The Lord. To receive this revelation in our lives is so profound, the Bible even tells us, if we are not going to endure to the end, it would have been better for us to have never known the truth in the first place! (II Pet. 2:9-22)

In a nutshell, no, you cannot lose your salvation. However, whether we endure to the end and receive that crown of life, which is promised to all that love The Lord, is still a question. (James 1:12, Rev. 2:9-10) This is the reason Paul speaks so much about resisting the desires of the flesh. We can make the choice to serve God, but if we turn and go after the things of the flesh, we will miss out. Paul himself says in I Corinthians 9:27 that he keeps his body under subjection because he understands that if he does not, even after all the work of God he has done, he will not make it to heaven. So, will we be saved? It's all up to us and the decisions we make until the day we pass from this life or are caught up to meet Jesus in the air. Thus, Romans 13:11 tells us, "...awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." This is why the Bible tells us, today is the day of salvation. (II Cor. 6:2) We never know when these physical forms will give up the ghost. Even if we are as strong as an ox and healthy as any human can be, we could walk out tomorrow and get hit by a truck. That is, if we live to see tomorrow! Today is the day to start, renew, or continue to grow in our relationship with God. Let's not miss out on a second!

Additional Question - *"Can a Christian lose their salvation by sinning?"*

The first fact you must understand is that salvation is an eternal gift from God. Once it's obtained, it cannot be affected by sin. That is the beauty of the work Jesus came to do. Jesus did not come to keep us from dying; Jesus came so we could afford to die! John 3:17 tells us, Jesus came not into this world to condemn this world; but that through Him the world might be saved. The world was already facing an irrevocable judgment of death. This is something many misunderstand. The Bible's message is not, through salvation we can continue

exactly as we are, but that we can be born again. This is what is so wrong with the church teaching people that when they do something like, say a sinner's prayer, they are "born again." We should not live as if we are something special, but in the humility that we need to strive to overcome the temptations this current flesh faces, and give our lives to The One who sacrificed His life so that once this life of sin had past, we could be born again, unto eternal life!

Jesus came to turn the sting of death into a victory. (I Cor. 15:55-57) He gives us the opportunity for death to be a release from this world, in order to go to a place He has prepared for us. (John 14:2-3) Corruptible is what these physical forms are. This means, even if we were to obtain perfection in the execution of the knowledge of good and evil, we would still always be tempted. The possibility we could return to sin would always exist. So, this corruptible needs to take on incorruptibility. (I Cor. 15:51-54) Freedom from temptation and freedom from corruptibility is what we need if we are going to live an eternity of peace side by side with God. Jesus died so that we could die. Jesus rose from the dead as the Firstfruits among many, (I Cor. 15:14-23) to open the opportunity for any human, who desires God, to follow in His footsteps. If we die with Christ, we must also believe we will rise with Him. (Rom. 6:8-9) We must die so that we can be born again! (John 12:24-25)

So, sin will not cause us to lose our salvation, but sin can keep us from obtaining salvation in the first place. The most basic fact about sin is that sin is a choice. If we choose the right, then we do not sin; but if we choose the wrong, we sin. What we need to understand is that God created man in innocence not perfection. In the beginning this wasn't a problem, because God was there to guide and direct man's actions, and to lead man in the ways of righteousness. God's promise to man is that He will never put more on us than we can bear. (I Cor. 10:13) This is why humans were created in innocence. From the beginning, man was not given the knowledge of good and evil built in; therefore, man was not responsible for it. This innocence would give humans a chance to learn what was right and what was wrong in segments we could handle. Man would only be responsible for the direct things God told

them to do or not do; and in the beginning, God only told man not to do one thing. Man was told not to take of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Now some may ask, if God created us in innocence and not in perfection, why did He allow us access to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the first place? Why did that tree even exist? The answer is, God created man with a free will. This fact is also why God did not create us in perfection. Who we would be as individuals would be up to us. God was not really giving man a free will, if living in innocence under the direct mentorship of God was the only choice man had. So, God allowed man one simple choice that could change this dynamic. If he wanted to be fully responsible for his own actions, man could remove himself from innocence by obtaining the knowledge of good and evil for himself. However, Adam and Eve were warned that in the day they ate of the fruit, they would not make it through one day without failing to be perfect, (Gen. 2:17) and the wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23)

In this, we see the truth that sin is having the knowledge to do good and not do it. (James 4:17) If we have read our Bibles, we know Adam and Eve did not refrain from taking of the tree, and when they did, they immediately had problems on their hands which they did not know what to do with. Under God's perfect plan, man was safe and secure. Man did not have to face death because man would always have access to the Tree of Life; but once man obtained the full knowledge of good and evil, he knew to do good, but immediately failed to execute righteousness in perfection. This forced God to remove man from the Tree of Life. (Gen. 3:22-24) Adam and Eve had failed, and they had laid a responsibility on all their offspring which would be far too heavy for us to bear. This is why the Bible simply tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" Romans 3:23. This truth meant there was no reason for God to leave any man with access to the Tree of Life. We will all have to face death!

This is also why man can never earn salvation. Coming short of God's glory means we are not perfect, and even if we reached perfection in our actions, it would be a long road. Without living in

innocence as we were created, we all do things which are worthy of death, all along the way. The Bible tells us, our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. (Isa. 64:6) This is why the fruits of the spirit are: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Against these, we are told there is no law! (Gal. 5:22-23) Being considerate of others and being humble before God is key to our lives. Jesus told us, if we were not forgiving of others, God would not be forgiving of us! (Matt. 6:14-15)

This means we are not saved because we have always been perfect. We are not saved because we have become perfect, and we are not saved because we will reach perfection or some level of perfection in this life. God is willing to grant us salvation in spite of our sin. This is why Ephesians 2:8 tells us, we are saved by "grace!" So how can sin deprive us of God's ultimate salvation, you ask? The answer is in the other fact contained in Ephesians 2:8. It tells us we are saved by grace through faith! Hebrews chapter 11 verse 6 tells us, point blank, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." What this boils down to is simply this - sin can ultimately deprive us of our salvation because it can deprive us of our faith!

Living this life in the way God intended us to live does not take away our free will, but freedom must have limits. Everyone cannot simply have whatever they want all the time. It's just not possible. This is why some actions are always wrong but others may only be wrong under certain situations. Being a freewilled being is complex. We can never be righteous by following a simple list of do's and don'ts. Righteousness is taking thought for our every action and decision. Only with God's help are we ever going to grow to understand what is right in every circumstance we find ourselves in. This is why loving The Lord our God with everything we have is the first and greatest commandment. (Matt. 22:37-38) It all starts with an understanding that God is perfect and we need to emulate that perfection in every way we can. If this is not our desire, then we have chosen a path of sin and destruction. Not just for ourselves but we will harm others as well.

If we do something which harms another human, we must understand that God made humans in His image, so to harm others is to harm God's creation. This means what we do unto others we are doing unto God. (Matt. 25:31-46) The earth is The Lord's and the fullness thereof. (I Cor. 10:26) Everything is created by God and therefore a part of His possessions. This is why in the beginning there was no sin. God created humans with a free will, but in innocence. Again, this was not a problem, because as we exercised our free will, God would be there to guide us. God's guidance started right from the first, blessing us and telling us to, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Genesis 1:28 In all things God was ready to guide us, and God would take direct responsibility for our actions. In God's perfection, we were following the direct instructions of God, and we would never have been able to do irreparable harm to others or the creation, and everything would have remained in perfection. That was the perfect plan of God. Once man chose to take the knowledge of good and evil for himself, all that changed. Man was no longer just free willed, but fully responsible to execute righteousness in and for himself. God dealt with the eternal problems this would cause by removing man from this life's source of eternal life - the Tree of Life.

From a fleshly standpoint this seems like a curse from God; but as we already talked about, in the plan of God, death is turned into a blessing. If we understand this even deeper, we realize that judgment is already laid out for the sin of imperfection. What matters now is not the fact we are all sinners, but whether we want to be sinners! This brings the opportunity for God to receive us much in the same way as He did before man took the knowledge for himself. God can have a relationship with us if we want to have a relationship with Him, but we are on the other side of the fence - so to speak.

Adam and Eve lived before God in innocence. They had to choose to walk away from God's created perfection. We live before God with the knowledge of sin, in a sin-filled world, so we must walk toward God's created perfection. This is why the scripture

tells us God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (II Pet. 3:9) Repentance simply means to turn. As we walk in imperfection, we must make a conscious decision to turn from imperfection and attempt to walk with God. This does not make us perfect, but it is a choice to listen to God so we can strive to be what He created us to be in the first place. This is walking in faith. Believing that God exists, that God has a perfect way for humans to live, and seeking to live in that perfection, believing that God rewards those who make that effort, is the correct way to live!

This means sin can keep us from salvation in two different ways. If we choose never to listen to the voice of God in our lives, our failure to execute righteousness in perfection will cause us to die. Because we did not desire to be with God, or follow His will, there is no reason for us to go to heaven. Heaven was prepared for those who want to spend eternity with God. This leaves only one option - hell, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matt. 25:41) Its purpose is so those who do not desire God can be separated from Him and those who want God's plan for their lives.

The second way sin can keep us from salvation is that we choose to listen to the voice of God; God in His grace grants us a walk with Him in spite of our imperfection, (Rom. 4:7-8) but we do not endure to the end. You see, Revelation describes for us the fact that only those who endure until the end will receive the crown of life. Why does it say we must endure? Because even though God is willing to overlook our lack of perfection, we can still choose to purposely do things we know are wrong!

This is the process described in James chapter 1. James is clearly talking to those who claim to love and walk with God. Starting in verse 2 he says this, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." He continues to instruct by telling us in verse 5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Then in verse 6-8 he warns, "But let him ask in faith, nothing

wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." In 9-11 James describes the human condition by saying, "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways." Then he tells us how a man who walks with God can ultimately lose out on salvation by sinning. Beginning in verse 12 he explains, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Be careful not to miss the words, "...drawn away..." in verse 14. What are we drawn away from? God's perfect plan. Temptation comes to the ones who are walking with God when we allow ourselves to be drawn away by some desire of the flesh that is not edifying to our walk with God. (I Cor. 6:12) If we make the choice to act on that lust, sin is born. Through these verses, we should understand that sin is something which, if we are not paying attention, we can fall into; but if we guard our lives, there are actually a couple of things we have to go crashing through in order to fall into sin. This clearly makes sin a choice, and we must endure the temptation to sin if we want the crown of life!

This is why James chapter 1 continues to lay out the facts we have been talking about. Verses 16-27 tell us this, "Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be

swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

The choice to walk with the Lord is not simply a one time choice. We must continue to care about our walk with God. Caring about our walk with God requires us to care about our actions. Not caring whether we take actions, which we know are wrong, is to sin. This sin will bring eternal separation from God. We must live in repentance, rejecting the evil and choosing the good. When we realize we have failed to do so, we must not fail to find a place of repentance and ask The Lord to forgive us! (II Cor. 7:9-10) We cannot walk in faith if we do not care to walk in righteousness. We are not attempting to walk in righteousness, if we know to do good and do it not! (James 4:17)

**Questions submitted to the Institute, answered by
Philip E. Busby.**

If you would like to submit a question of your own or if you have questions/comments about this Q&A, you can visit us online at www.livingspringsinstitute.org and click on [Q&A](#) or write to us at:

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