

HAVE YOU LOST IT?

YES

NO

?

What is the most valuable thing you could lose? Your:

mind	child	reputation
mother	home	hair
father	job	dog
spouse	health	freedom
eyesight	figure	friends

The Bible gives the answer by asking a question:

Matthew 16:26 What will a man be profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Where will you spend eternity? Are you going to heaven? Most people say, "I'm not sure, but I hope so". Everyone wants to know what's next and where they will be when this life is over but the majority do not have a clue. Some say that no one can know. Even those who are exceptionally good, who go to church regularly, who have been baptized and confirmed do not always know for sure that they are heaven-bound.

We have access to an unprecedented amount of information, so why does the crucial question concerning our eternal destiny still remain unanswered for so many? Is it because the one source of revelation and absolute truth is being ignored?

The Bible is absolutely clear on who is going to heaven and who is not :

Acts 16:30 b - 31 a . . . Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. . ."

John 3:14 b -16 . . . the Son of man [Jesus Christ] must be lifted up [on the cross]; that whoever believes in Him has eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but has everlasting life.

John 3:18 He who believes on Him [Jesus Christ] is not judged but he who does not believe has been judged already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Note that **believing** in Jesus Christ is the only requirement necessary for eternal life. It alone secures salvation with the guarantee that we will never come under God's condemnation. It is faith alone in Christ that saves, not faith in a Supreme being, in a higher power, or in our good works.

Believing in Jesus Christ means more than believing, the historical account of a man named Jesus who claimed to be the Son of God and the Savior of all mankind. It means to believe that He truly was the Son of God who became our substitute on the cross where He paid for our sins in full. It means to trust in His work, not our own works. It means to have faith alone in Him alone for salvation.

God has made promises to believers so that they will have no fear of losing eternal life and no doubts concerning their future in heaven.

John 14:2-3 - In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

I John 5:13 - These things I have written to you who believe in the name [person] of the Son of God [Jesus Christ], in order that you may **KNOW** that you have eternal life.

Faith in Christ guarantees our reservation in heaven but confidence of this comes by believing what God has said. Some believers fear they may not be saved because they either do not know or do not believe God's promises.

"Gospel" means "good news". The fact that we go to heaven by simply believing in Jesus Christ is good news. However, knowing that we cannot lose our salvation is even better news! How good would the gospel news be if eternal life could be lost? What if the maintenance of our salvation was left up to us? What if it could be canceled by sins we commit? That certainly would not be good news.

No one has to be concerned about these questions because no believer has ever lost his salvation and no believer ever will. Consider the facts:

FACT #1 SALVATION IS BY GRACE, NOT BY WORKS

Every person is guilty of sin, condemned by God, and needs to be saved. No one is worthy of salvation.

Romans 3:10-12 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

There is nothing we can do to earn salvation. God only accepts the perfect work of our Lord on the cross on our behalf. Even our best human efforts are rejected by God:

Isaiah 64:6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are as filthy rags.

The harder we work for salvation, the farther away it gets.

Romans 4:4-5 Now to one who works, his wage is not reckoned as grace, but as debt. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.

Good works are rejected by God as the means of gaining or maintaining salvation.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.

Romans 3:21-24 But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law has been

made known, to which the Law and the prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ.

Salvation is received non-meritoriously by depending on Jesus Christ. It is not the strength or the endurance of our faith but the object of our faith, Jesus Christ, that receives all the credit.

WE CAN DO NOTHING to gain salvation, and WE CAN DO NOTHING to lose it. Those who do not believe this are being misled. The idea that Christ did His part on the cross and now we must do our part by maintaining a certain level of morality or goodness in order to get to heaven is not the truth of the Bible but a lie from Satan.

Morality or keeping the Ten Commandments cannot save! Christ made a wasted trip to the cross if we can get to heaven by being moral. In fact, hell will be full of good, moral people who have depended on themselves rather than Christ for salvation.

FACT #2 SALVATION IS A GIFT

Just because salvation is free does not mean that it came without a price tag. The cost was tremendous! Jesus Christ paid for it in full by dying in our place on the cross. He was our substitute, taking the judgment for our sins on His own perfect body. That was His gift to us. A gift is free. It is either accepted or rejected, but it is never earned. If salvation could be earned, it would **not** be a gift. It would be payment that we deserve for something we did. Scripture makes it clear; salvation is a gift, no strings attached.

God will not freely give a gift and then take it back. To do so would be completely out of character for Him.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death but the **free gift** of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by **grace** are you saved through faith and that not of yourself, it is the **gift of God**, not of works, lest any man should boast.

“Grace” is receiving something we do not earn or deserve. Wouldn’t you agree that it is foolish to work for something that is free?

Anyone who trusts in his own works and ability is in effect saying that Christ’s atonement was not good enough. He ignores what Christ said as he hung on the cross before he died: ***John 19:30 ... it is finished!*** Salvation was completed, the gift was purchased, nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it. We either accept the gift by believing in Jesus Christ or reject it by trying to work for it.

Eternal life is a permanent gift. “Eternal” means infinite duration, everlasting, perpetual, endless, something impossible to lose. There is not one account in the entire Bible where anyone received the gift of eternal life and then lost it.

Those who believe they must work for salvation will stand before Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). Their sins, which were already judged on the cross, will not be mentioned. Since they rejected Christ’s perfect work on the cross as the only way into heaven, they will have to rely on their own works to get in. They will find that only Christ’s work is acceptable to God. Therefore, they will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

FACT #3 SALVATION RESTS ON GOD’S POWER AND HIS PROMISES. NOT OURS

Our salvation endures because its security depends on God, not on us. What a relief! What great news!

1 Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according

to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Jude 24 *Now unto Him [Jesus Christ] who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory [God the Father] with exceeding joy.*

John 10:28 *I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.*

Romans 8:35 & 38-39 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or peril, or sword? For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

There is no sin, no power and no person that can cause us to lose our salvation. Even if we change our mind and renounce Christ, we cannot lose our salvation. The gift of eternal life is permanent no matter how much our faith may waver.

1 Timothy 2:11-12 *... if we endure [suffering] we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him; He also will deny us [rewards]; if we are faithless [turn away from Him], He remains; faithful [He does not take back the free gift] for He cannot deny Himself [His promise of eternal life still stands].*

Our weakness does not diminish God's strength. Our failures do not revoke His promises.

FACT #4 BELIEVERS ARE CHILDREN OF GOD

Romans 8:16 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*

Galatians 3:26 *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

A believer's relationship with his heavenly Father is similar to the one with his earthly father. Our confidence is strengthened by knowing that our spiritual relationship cannot be broken any more than our physical one can be. There is nothing a child or his father can do to sever their physical relationship, and there is nothing a believer or God can do to sever their spiritual relationship. It is permanent! The Bible never speaks of any child of God being disowned or disinherited.

FACT #5 BELIEVERS ARE NOT CONDEMNED

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

John 3:18 *He that believes on Him is **not condemned**; but he that does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

John 5:24 *Truly, truly I say unto you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and shall **not come into condemnation**, but has passed out of death into life.*

It is impossible for believers to come under condemnation because they have gone from spiritual death to spiritual life. They possess eternal life because they were born again the moment they believed in Jesus Christ.

Believers still sin after they are saved, but they are not condemned for their sins. Why? Because Christ was condemned for these sins on the cross. It would be unjust for God to condemn us for the sins for which Christ has already been judged.

Does this mean that there are no consequences for our sins? Of course not. Believers suffer divine discipline when they sin. Our heavenly Father disciplines His children, but He does not condemn them. There is a difference between divine discipline, which is temporary suffering, and condemnation, which is eternal death.

The believer who chooses to reject God's commands is disciplined; the unbeliever who chooses to reject Jesus Christ as his Savior is condemned.

WHAT IF . . .

If eternal life could be lost: Certain questions would need to be answered:

1. How many sins would cause you to lose eternal life?
2. Which sins would cause you to lose it?
3. How many good deeds would it take to keep it?
4. What type of good deeds must be done to keep it?
5. Can it be regained once it is lost?
6. How could it be regained?
7. Can eternal life be lost and regained and then lost again?
8. What examples does the Bible give of those who lost it?
9. What examples does the Bible give of those who regained it?
10. How can a person know if he has lost it?
11. How can a person know if he has regained it?

You can read the Bible cover to cover and not find answers to these questions. Why? Because they are irrelevant and require no answers since eternal life cannot be lost. The apostle John did a great job of summing things up:

1 John 5:10-12 *The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness [truth of the gospel] in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has made concerning His Son and the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son [has believed in Jesus Christ] has [eternal] life; he who does not have the Son of God [does not believe in Jesus Christ] does not have [eternal] life.*

The following are brief explanations of some verses that have been misconstrued.

Matthew 24:13 *But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.*

Some think this verse means a person will not go to heaven unless he continues to do good until he dies. They are confused by thinking the word "saved" refers to eternal salvation when actually, it refers to physical deliverance. The context of chapter 24 clearly refers to believers who survive the Tribulation to the end. They will then be physically delivered from the judgment that occurs when the Lord returns so that they can populate the earth during the Millennium.

James 2:14, 17, 24 *What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no*

works? Can that faith save him? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself . . . You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.

People quote this verse when trying to prove that good works must be added to faith in order to be saved. But notice that James is writing to “brethren”, people who are already saved.

He was not warning believers that their eternal security was in jeopardy but that they were in danger of an untimely death due to a dead faith that produced no good works.

Believers who choose to rebel against their heavenly Father by living a fruitless unprincipled life are in danger of an early physical death. ***Proverbs 11:19 - As righteousness leads to [prolonged] life, so he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death.*** God sometimes disciplines an arrogant indifferent believer by taking him out of this world.

The Bible is full of commands to do good works but many believers ignore them because they have no motivation to please God nor compassion for their fellow man. James calls this a “dead faith”. It cannot cause him to lose his salvation but it can cause him to:

1. Come under divine discipline to the point of losing his physical life.
2. Lose rewards in heaven.
3. Have no witness before unbelievers.

The key to understanding what James has written is to recognize that there are two kinds of justification. One is by faith and the other is by works. We are justified before God by our faith and we are justified before other people by our works. We are not justified before God by our faith and our works; that is heresy!

Mark 16:16 He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved, but he who does not believe shall be condemned.

Some think this verse makes water baptism a condition for salvation. Notice carefully that this verse does **not** say, “he who does not believe and is not baptized shall be condemned”. Only unbelief condemns. No lack of good works, including water baptism, can condemn a person.

The baptism mentioned is not the ritual of water baptism but the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that is a work accomplished by God for us at the moment we accept Christ (I Cor. 12:13) in which God the Holy Spirit permanently identifies us with Jesus Christ by placing us in union with Him.

Hebrews 6:4-6 For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who . . . have fallen away since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

Is this saying that a person can lose eternal life and that once he has, it is impossible to get it back? **Absolutely not!** This was written to Jews who had believed in Jesus Christ but continued to sacrifice animals even after Christ was sacrificed on the cross. It was hard for them to stop observing a ritual that their ancestors had observed for over a thousand years. So the writer of Hebrews reminded them in ***Hebrews 10:12 . . . but He, having offered one Sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.***

These Jewish believers had fallen away from the fundamentals of the Christian faith that they had been taught. Every time they sacrificed an animal they were again crucifying the Son of God and putting Him up to an open shame, as if His sacrifice was not sufficient. As long as they continued to do this, it was impossible to renew them to “repentance”, which means to “change their mind” to line up with correct fundamental doctrines.

Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling . . .

Again, this was written to believers who already possessed eternal life. The word “salvation” causes confusion because most people automatically equate it with eternal life. But this is never its meaning in the entire book of Philippians. It is used to convey the idea of being physically delivered from something. From what do believers need delivering?

Before this can be answered, one must first understand that some believers are winners and some are losers. The winners are obedient to the commands of God such as growing up spiritually by studying the Word (II Tim. 2:15), confessing sins (I John 1:9), unconditionally loving others (John 13:34), and doing good works (Eph.2:10), just to name a few. They will receive rewards, decorations, special blessings and privileges that will last for all eternity.

Loser believers waste their time on earth by being disobedient and indifferent to God and His Word. They have bought Satan’s lie that happiness and contentment can be found in money, sex, power, friends, a big house, a different spouse, a fun time, etc. Consequently, they never grow up spiritually and they lose out on the great things that winner believers receive.

“Working out your salvation” is a call to be a winner believer. It is a plea to be delivered from the miserable life and losses of the loser believer. Fear and trembling are mentioned in this verse to warn believers that losing eternal rewards is no trivial matter.

Galatians 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by the law; you have fallen from grace.

There is a big difference between an unbeliever who is condemned for rejecting God’s grace and a believer who has drifted off course by trying to maintain his salvation by works.

The Galatian believers fell for the lies of the Judaizers that salvation is secured by keeping the Mosaic Law. They fell away from the correct teaching that salvation is obtained and maintained entirely by God’s grace. The Greek word used for falling away is “*ekpipto*” which means to drift off course. Believers drift off course when they exchange grace and freedom for the slavery of legalism and divine discipline.

Hebrews 10:26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.

All sin is willful in the sense that we sin because we want to. However the willful sinning here refers to believers who have abandoned the Christian faith. They have deliberately ignored the commands (in 10:23 and 10:25) instructing them to, “hold fast the confidence of their hope without wavering” and “forsake not the assembling of ourselves together”. They had trampled under foot the Son of God, regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and insulted the Spirit of grace (10:29).

These apostate believers had abandoned their faith in the only true sacrifice, (Christ’s) and were being reminded that there is no other acceptable sacrifice for sins. They were being warned to expect stinging divine discipline that is compared to the fury of fire that would consume the adversaries of the Christian faith that they had joined.

Hebrews 10:39 sums up this idea by saying, “***We are not of those who shrink back to destruction*** [loss of eternal rewards and severe divine discipline] ***but of those who have faith to the preserving***

of the soul [a life free from the divine discipline of a premature death].

The most important question you will ever answer is, "Have you accepted God's free gift of eternal life by faith alone in Christ alone"? If your answer is yes, you have eternal life and you never have to struggle with the fear of losing it. You can confidently put a check mark in the "No" box below because your eternal future is as secure as God's promises!

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
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No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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