

A Study of the Ordo Salutis (Order of Salvation) and Man's Relationship with Sin

P Perseverance of the Saints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WCF Ch. XVII, XVIII• WCF-LC Q.79-81	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phil 1:6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 Cor 1:8-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 Tim 1:12• John 10:28
<p>Overview: God's elect can never lose their salvation. They will persevere until the end.</p> <p>Can someone who has been saved lose their salvation? No.</p> <p>Why Not? The immutability of the decree of election (unchangeable).</p> <p>Can God's grace be limited or withheld? Yes. Why? Sin.</p> <p>What is the result? God's displeasure, Holy Spirit grieves, heart is hardened, conscience is wounded, others are hurt and scandalized, bring temporal judgments upon yourself.</p> <p>How can we be sure of our salvation? WCF Ch. XVII, XVIII and WCF-LC Q. 79-81</p>				

*"The perseverance of the saints is, in reality, the perseverance of the Savior in the saints."
- Steven Lawson*

Scripture References

Philippians 1:6 ⁶ For 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.

1 Corinthians 1:8-9 ⁸ who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Timothy 1:12 ¹² For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

John 10:28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger Catechism

Q. 79: May not true believers, by reason of their imperfections, and the many temptations and sins they are overtaken with, fall away from the state of grace?

A. True believers, by reason of the unchangeable love of God,¹ and his decree and covenant to give them perseverance,² their inseparable union with Christ,³ his continual intercession for them,⁴ and the Spirit and seed of God abiding in them,⁵ can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace,⁶ but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.⁷

1. **Jeremiah 31:3** The LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

2. **2 Timothy 2:19** But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." **Hebrews 13:20-21** Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. **2 Samuel 23:5** For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?

3. **1 Corinthians 1:8-9** Who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

4. **Hebrews 7:25** Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. **Luke 22:32** But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

5. **1 John 3:9** No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. **1 John 2:27** But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and

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you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

6. **Jeremiah 32:40** I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. **John 10:28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.
7. **1 Peter 1:5** Who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Q. 80. Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation?

A. Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavour to walk in all good conscience before him,¹ may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made,² and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God,³ be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.⁴

1. **1 John 2:3** And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.
2. **1 Corinthians 2:12** Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. **1 John 3:14, 18-19, 21, 24** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. ... Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him. ... Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God. ... Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us. **1 John 4:13, 16** By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ... So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. **Hebrews 6:11-12** And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
3. **Romans 8:16** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.
4. **1 John 5:13** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

Q. 81. Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in the estate of grace, and that they shall be saved?

A. Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith,¹ true believers may wait long before they obtain it;² and, after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations, and desertions;³ yet they are never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.⁴

1. **Ephesians 1:13** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.
2. **Isaiah 50:10** Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God. **Psalms 88:1-3, 6-7, 9-10, 13-15** O LORD, God of my salvation; I cry out day and night before you. Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry! For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. ... You have put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves. Selah. ... My eye grows dim through sorrow. Every day I call upon you, O LORD; I spread out my hands to you. Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the departed rise up to praise you? Selah. ... But I, O LORD, cry to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you. O LORD, why do you cast my soul away? Why do you hide your face from me? Afflicted and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am helpless.
3. **Psalms 77:1-12** I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted. When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints. Selah. You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I consider the days of old, the years long ago. I said, "Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in my heart." Then my spirit made a diligent search: "Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable? Has his steadfast love forever

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ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" Selah. Then I said, "I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High." I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds. **Song of Solomon 5:2-3, 6** I slept, but my heart was awake. A sound! My beloved is knocking. "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one, for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night." I had put off my garment; how could I put it on? I had bathed my feet; how could I soil them? ... I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone. My soul failed me when he spoke. I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer. **Psalm 51:8, 12** Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. ... Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. **Psalm 31:22** I had said in my alarm, "I am cut off from your sight." But you heard the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cried to you for help. **Psalm 22:1** My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

- 1 John 3:9** No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. **Psalm 73:15, 23** If I had said, "I will speak thus," I would have betrayed the generation of your children. ... Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. **Isaiah 54:7-10** For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer. "This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you. For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. 17, Of the Perseverance of the Saints

1. 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.¹
2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father;² upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ,³ the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them,⁴ and the nature of the covenant of grace;⁵ from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.⁶
3. Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins;⁷ and, for a time, continue therein:⁸ whereby they incur God's displeasure,⁹ and grieve His Holy Spirit,¹⁰ come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts,¹¹ have their hearts hardened,¹² and their consciences wounded,¹³ hurt and scandalize others,¹⁴ and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.¹⁵
 - 1. Phil. 1:6** For 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. **2 Pet. 1:10** Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; **1 John 3:9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **1 Pet. 1:5,9** who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time... obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.
 - 2 Tim. 2:18-19** men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some. Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness." **Jer. 31:3** The Lord appeared to him from afar, saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness.
 - Heb. 10:10, 14** By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. **Heb. 13:20-21** Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. **Heb. 9:12-15** and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of

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goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. **Rom. 8:33–39** Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 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, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. **John 17:11, 24** I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are... Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. Luke 22:32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. **Heb. 7:25** Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

4. **John 14:16–17** I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. **1 John 2:27** As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. **1 John 3:9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.
5. **Jer. 32:40** I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.
6. **John 10:28** and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. **2 Thess. 3:3** But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. **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, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.
7. **Matt. 26:70, 72, 74** But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about."... And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man."... Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed.
8. **Ps. 51:1** Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God. To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
9. **Isa. 64:5, 7, 9** You meet him who rejoices in doing righteousness, who remembers You in Your ways. Behold, You were angry, for we sinned, we continued in them a long time, and shall we be saved?... There is no one who calls on Your name, who arouses himself to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us and have delivered us into the power of our iniquities... Do not be angry beyond measure, O Lord, nor remember iniquity forever; behold, look now, all of us are Your people. **2 Sam. 11:27** When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord.
10. **Eph. 4:30** Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
11. **Ps. 51:8, 10, 12** Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which You have broken rejoice... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me... Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit. **Rev. 2:4** But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. **Song of Solomon 5:2–4, 6** "I was asleep but my heart was awake. A voice! My beloved was knocking: 'Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one! For my head is drenched with dew, my locks with the damp of the night.' "I have taken off my dress, how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet, how can I dirty them again? "My beloved extended his hand through the opening, and my feelings were aroused for him... I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone. My soul failed me when he spoke. I sought him, but found him not; I called him, but he gave no answer.

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12. **Isa. 63:17** Why, O Lord, do You cause us to stray from Your ways and harden our heart from fearing You? Return for the sake of Your servants, the tribes of Your heritage. **Mark 6:52** for they had not gained any insight from the incident of the loaves, but their heart was hardened. **Mark 16:14** Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.
13. **Ps. 32:3-4** When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. **Ps. 51:8** Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which You have broken rejoice.
14. **2 Sam. 12:14** "However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die."
15. **Ps. 89:31-32** If they violate My statutes and do not keep My commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes. **1 Cor. 11:32** But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. 18, Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation

1. Although hypocrites and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God, and estate of salvation¹ (which hope of theirs shall perish):² yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may, in this life, be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace,³ and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.⁴
2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope;⁵ but an infallible assurance of faith founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation,⁶ the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made,⁷ the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God,⁸ which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.⁹
3. This infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it:¹⁰ yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto.¹¹ And therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure,¹² that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience,¹³ the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness.¹⁴
4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as, by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of His countenance, and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light:¹⁵ yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart, and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may, in due time, be revived;¹⁶ and be the which, in the mean time, they are supported from utter despair.¹⁷
 1. **Job 8:13-14** So are the paths of all who forget God; and the hope of the godless will perish, whose confidence is fragile, and whose trust a spider's web. **Micah 3:11** Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, her priests instruct for a price and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord saying, "Is not the Lord in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us." **Deut. 29:19** It shall be when he hears the words of this curse, that he will boast, saying, 'I have peace though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart in order to destroy the watered land with the dry.' **John 8:41** "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."
 2. **Matt. 7:22-23** "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'
 3. **1 John 2:3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. **1 John 3:14,18-19,21,24** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in

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death...Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him...Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;... The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. **1 John 5:13** These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

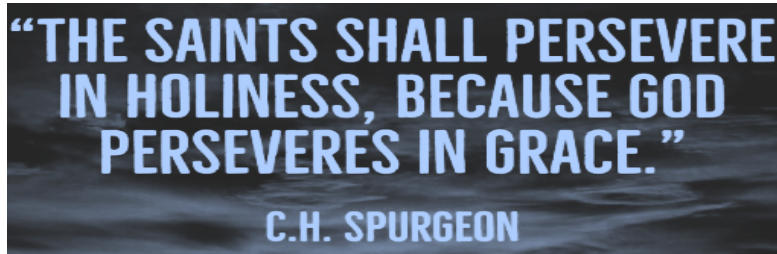
4. **Rom. 5:2,5** through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God...and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
5. **Heb. 6:11, 19** And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end...This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,
6. **Heb. 6:17–18** In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.
7. **2 Pet. 1:4–5, 10–11** For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,... Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. **1 John 2:3** By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. **1 John 3:14** We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. **2 Cor. 1:12** For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.
8. **Rom. 8:15–16** For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,
9. **Eph. 1:13–14** In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory. **Eph. 4:30** Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **2 Cor. 1:21–22** Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.
10. **1 John 5:13** These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. **Isa. 50:10** Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God. **Mark 9:24** Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.” **Ps. 88, Ps. 77:1–12**
11. **1 Cor. 2:12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, **1 John 4:13** By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. **Heb. 6:11–12** And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. **Eph. 3:17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
12. **2 Pet. 1:10** Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;
13. **Rom. 5:1–2, 5** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God...and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. **Rom. 14:17** for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. **Rom. 15:13** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Eph. 1:3–4** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love **Ps. 4:6–7** Many are saying, “Who will show us any good?” Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O Lord! You have

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put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and new wine abound. **Ps. 119:32** I shall run the way of Your commandments, for You will enlarge my heart.

- 14. 1 John 2:1–2** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. **Rom. 6:1–2** What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? **Tit. 2:11–12, 14** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,... who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. **2 Cor. 7:1** Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. **Rom. 8:1, 12** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— **1 John 3:2–3** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. **Ps. 130:4** but there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared. **1 John 1:6–7** If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
- 15. Song of Solomon 5:2-3, 6** “I was asleep but my heart was awake. A voice! My beloved was knocking: ‘Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one! For my head is drenched with dew, my locks with the damp of the night.’ “I have taken off my dress, how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet, how can I dirty them again?... “I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and had gone! My heart went out to him as he spoke. I searched for him but I did not find him; I called him but he did not answer me. **Ps. 51:8, 12, 14** Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which You have broken rejoice...Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit...Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. **Eph. 4:30-31** Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. **Ps. 77:1–10, Matt. 26:69–72** Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him and said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” When he had gone out to the gateway, another servant-girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” And again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” **Ps. 31:22** As for me, I said in my alarm, “I am cut off from before Your eyes”; Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried to You. **Ps. 88, Isa. 50:10** Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.
- 16. 1 John 3:9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **Luke 22:32** but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. **Job 13:15** Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him. **Ps. 73:15** If I had said, “I will speak thus,” Behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children. **Ps. 51:8, 12** Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which You have broken rejoice...Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit **Isa. 50:10** Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.
- 17. Micah 7:7–9** But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy. Though I fall I will rise; though I dwell in darkness, the Lord is a light for me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against Him, until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me out to the light, and I will see His righteousness. **Jer. 32:40** I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. **Isa. 54:7–10** “For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. “In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment, but with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you,” Says the Lord your Redeemer. “For this is like the days of Noah to Me, when I swore that the waters of Noah would not flood the earth again; So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you nor will I rebuke you. “For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, but My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, and My covenant of peace will not be shaken,” Says the Lord who has compassion on you. **Ps. 22:1** My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. **Ps. 88**

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Self-Study

Question:

Can someone truly be a Christian, lose his/her faith over a period of years, and then become a Christian again? Can you get back on right terms with God, or do you just have to hope that God will, in his own time, have mercy on you and take you back into his family?

Answer:

The Bible teaches that once you are saved you cannot lose your salvation. There are many, many arguments and proofs for this doctrine, including:

1. Christians are predestined not just to initial salvation but to eternal salvation.
(Acts 13:47-48; Rom. 8:28-30; 9:18-24; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Thess. 5:9-10).
2. Christ's death secured salvation for those for whom he died.
(Heb. 9:11-15).
3. Justification (being declared righteous and forgiven by God) cannot be lost or revoked.
(Rom. 5:8-10,15-19; 8:1-4,9-11,29-30; Heb. 9:11-12).
4. The saved/elect are given to Christ as a permanent possession.
(John 6:35-40; 10:25-29).
5. The saved/elect are kept secure in Christ by God.
(John 6:35-40; 10:25-29; Rom. 8:28-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-9; 2 Cor. 4:13-14; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; Phil. 1:6; 3:20-21; Col. 3:3-4; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 1 John 2:19; 5:4; Jude 1,24-25).
6. Eternal life begins at conversion, and by definition may never end.
(John 3:14-16,36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:35-40,44-58; 10:25-29; 17:1-3; 20:31; Rom. 6:22-23; 1 Tim. 6:12; Heb. 9:15; 1 John 5:11-13,20).
7. God is sovereign in salvation, his will must be accomplished, and he wills the perseverance of the saints.
(Job 42:1-2; Isa. 14:24,27; 46:8-11; Matt. 18:12-14; John 6:35-40).

Source Reference: <https://thirdmill.org/answers/answer.asp/file/39868>

The Perseverance and Preservation of Believers: Can I Lose My Salvation?

REFORMED theology has generally used the twofold terminology of the *perseverance* and *preservation* of believers when addressing the question of true believers' eternal security in Christ. This terminology represents a balanced approach to the Biblical teaching that perseverance in the Christian faith is required to receive the final reward of eternal salvation but that the perseverance of all who have genuinely trusted Christ is guaranteed because of God's preservation. Believers persevere by persistence under discouragement and contrary pressure, but they are able to do so because Jesus Christ through the Spirit ensures that every true believer will endure to the end.

Many other Christian traditions diverge from Reformed theology by going in one of two directions. On the one hand, some teach that it is possible for people who have exercised saving faith, who are genuinely regenerated in Christ, to lose their salvation. They appeal to passages in Scripture that warn against turning from the faith and require obedience to receive the final reward of eternal salvation (e.g., Ps 69:28; Mt 24:13; Lk 9:62; Jn 2:23-24; 15:6; 1Co 9:27; 2Co 13:5; Heb 3:6; 6:1-8; 10:26-31; 12:14; 2Pe 2:21-22; Rev 2:7,11,17; 22:19). Reformed theology has acknowledged that these and similar passages require perseverance and indicate that a person may exercise a measure of faith and receive many blessings from God, but then suffer eternal judgment because of apostasy. The question is, What kind of faith and what kind of blessings do such people have?

On the other hand, some branches of the church teach that the only requirements for eternal salvation are a decision to receive Christ as Savior and a sincere profession of faith. They draw upon passages that stress that justification is by faith alone and that salvation is a free gift that cannot be lost (e.g., Jn 3:16; 6:37; Ac 16:31; Ro 3:28; 8:38-39; Gal 2:16). Extreme versions of this outlook are sometimes called *decisionism* or *easy believism*, meaning that the only requirement for salvation is that a person have sincerely professed faith in Christ as Savior, but not necessarily as Lord. Seldom distinguishing between the kind of faith that saves and that which does not, or between true believers and mere professors of faith, these Christians hold that while a person can lose temporal blessings because of flagrant, habitual sin, no sincere person has to fear the eternal judgment of God. Some go so far as to insist that even if one repudiates a prior confession of faith and rejects Christ, that person will still be saved.

Reformed theology strikes a balance between these two positions, embracing some aspects of both

points of view and rejecting others. On the one hand, the need for perseverance is acknowledged. It is true that we are justified by faith alone, but faith that saves is never truly "alone." As James put it, "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (Jas 2:17). For this reason, Paul exhorted the Philippian Christians to "work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling" (Php 2:12) because during the Christian life one's faith is tested to see whether the person is truly in Christ (2Co 13:5). In this sense, Reformed theologians often distinguish saving faith from seemingly sincere but temporary faith that leads to hypocrisy and apostasy.

As the parable of the sower indicates (Mt 13:18-23), there are different kinds of faith, but only faith that produces the fruit of holy living is saving faith. This is why the writer of Hebrews insisted that "without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). Those with temporary faith may experience many blessings from God because of their close association with the faithful (Heb 6:1-6; 2Pe 2:21-22), but they will lose those blessings as they turn from Christ and will eventually suffer eternal judgment (Heb 10:26-31). Many who say to Jesus, "Lord, Lord," will not be acknowledged (Mt 7:21-23). Only those who show themselves to be regenerate by pursuing holiness as they pass through this world are entitled to believe themselves secure in Christ. Persevering in faith and penitence, not just in Christian formalism, is the path to glory.

Nevertheless, Reformed theology has also emphasized that God's gracious preservation must sustain true believers so that they remain faithful to Christ. Christians do not begin their walk with Christ by faith and then continue by reliance on their own efforts (Gal 3:3). Paul exhorted the Philippians to "work out [their] salvation" (Php 2:12) but then added, "for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Php 2:13). Paul also assured them, declaring that "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion" (Php 1:6). Jesus himself stressed his preservation of true believers when he said that believers "shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand" (Jn 10:28).

Sometimes truly regenerate believers backslide and fall into gross sin. But in this they act out of character, do violence to their own new nature and make themselves deeply miserable, so that eventually they seek and find restoration to righteousness. When regenerate people act in character, they manifest a humble, grateful desire to please the God who saved them, and the knowledge that he is pledged to keep them safe forever simply increases this desire. See WCF 17; BC 24,25; HC 86; CD V.

Source Reference: Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible, 2003. Page 1919.