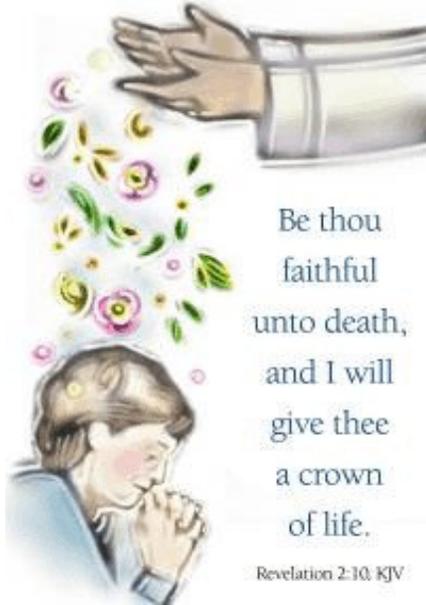


LESSON 12



FAITHFULNESS

Scripture Texts: Hebrews 3:14; 10:35-39; Jude 20-21

Today we are often asked what we believe. The question is not what we believe, but whom we believe. If we give Christ our hearts, we can be certain of the only real security life can have. He will guard us from all sin and help us in temptation. He will lead us in the right way and give us power and determination to make it over life's pathway with total victory. Only in holding confidence in God to the end can we go to Heaven. If a saved person grows weary in well doing and draws back from God, he is lost.

Many more people start in the Christian race than finish it. Can fallouts be prevented? Why do some fall? Let us see if we can find the answers to these questions in the Bible.

MEMORY VERSE: *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.* — Hebrews 3:14

Be Steadfast

Hebrews 3:14. **We are made partakers of Christ, if . . .** The supreme desire of disciples is to be final and complete **partakers of Christ**. He who believes on Him and in repentance yields the heart to Him does partake of Him spiritually. We must never forget that salvation is a spiritual work, all the way. Thus one is made a part of the body of Christ. Christ lives in him (read 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 3:17). But more is promised. To see Christ, to be in His presence, and to share Heaven's bliss forever are joys we must not miss. To gain these realities, we must trust Him and be faithful, **stedfast unto the end**. The **beginning of our confidence . . .** Remember how dear He was in those first days of your Christian life? How fully you trusted? Hold that confidence **stedfast**—firm and constant—until death. No promise is ours if we stop trusting Jesus. We must obey His Word completely to be counted faithful.

The unsaved cannot be confident of God's favor. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John 3:21). The heart condemned by sin must repent. Then we may "abide in him . . . have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28).

Do Not Throw It Away

Hebrews 10:35. **Cast not away therefore your confidence.** No one can TAKE from us the favor of God or our place in Heaven. Jesus said, "No man is able to pluck them [saved ones] out of my Father's hand" (John 10:29). But we ourselves can THROW **confidence** away by ceasing to trust God, by doubting His promises or power to keep us. If kept, **confidence** will bring us a **great recompense of reward**. What reward? "An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

The devil has many methods to make us lose **confidence** in God. One method is to come in time of trial or weakness and say, "See, you are no longer saved. Don't claim to be. Let go." Or he will say, "Look at these other people; they are not living for God; they never have any trouble like you do. They are getting along good, much better than you are. Give up, it's not worth it." THEN is the time to HOLD FAST to **confidence** in God. Satan cannot take it from you. Here he is trying to influence you to throw it away. To cast it away is disastrous. Pray, listen to the other Voice—God through His Word and Spirit—and obey. Take heart from Jesus' Words to the Philadelphian church. Revelation 3:8-11: "Thou hast a

little strength . . . Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee . . . : hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Danger in Drawing Back

Hebrews 10:36-39. **For ye have need of patience.** We meet sin, frustration, opposition, difficulty, failure, disaster, and disappointment. These sometimes tend to obscure inner peace. We need **patience** to serve without growing weary, to persevere without complaining, and to hope without losing faith. Why? Because Christ will come. He says, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me" (Revelation 22:12). With **patience** be faithful and hold onto **confidence**. **The just shall live by faith.** The justified life is sustained by faith. **If any man draw back**, he is lost. God shall **have no pleasure in him**. One who falls back falls into a lost state again. Yes, a saved person can be lost. But he need not be if he remains faithful and keeps faith fixed in God.

Not in Our Own Strength

Jude 20-21. **Keep yourselves in the love of God.** As we have learned throughout these past lessons, this achievement cannot be reached in our own strength. Standing on **your most holy faith**—the Bible doctrines as a foundation—build yourselves up, grow in grace, study, obey, and become strong. See Colossians 2:7. Continually pray **in the Holy Ghost**—in union with Him, in obedience to Him. **Keep yourselves in the love of God** (this is our part). That love is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Romans 5:5). God is faithful to do His part. We must be faithful to do ours.

JUST A THOUGHT

**The man who does as he pleases
is seldom pleased with what he does.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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