

## ETERNAL SECURITY

Many of God's people are sharply divided in their understanding of the problem of sin in the life of a believer. All Christians agree that sin is possible after salvation, but not all see eye to eye on how it affects the believer's relationship with God. Some, emphasizing the responsibility of man, teach a conditional security. They say the believer is to maintain a high degree of holiness and separation from sin to prevent him from "falling from grace." Others emphasize the grace of God and His power to "keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

Most of the objections to the doctrine of eternal security are caused by perversion of the doctrine. Nowhere does the Bible state that a person is free to live in sin after he is saved; in fact, just the opposite is taught in Scripture (Rom. 6:1,2; 2 Tim. 2:19). The Bible says that the believer is a new creation and has a new nature from God (2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Pet. 1:4), and indicates that he would not want to live in sin. If a person claimed to be a Christian but wanted to continue living in sin, one could seriously question his salvation.

The Bible teaches that God keeps those who belong to Him (John 10:28,29; 17:11,12; 1 Pet. 1:3-5). If God did not do the keeping, the believer would be under obligation to maintain his own salvation. This would engender pride in the person who feels that he is good enough to keep himself free from sin. The Bible teaches that the Christian still has the old nature which is in conflict with the new nature he received at the new birth (Gal. 5:16,17). No believer can therefore keep himself saved; his security is in Christ.

The distinction between a believer's relationship with God and his fellowship with Him is very important. Whenever a Christian experiences doubt or falls into sin, he loses the joy and peace of his fellowship with God - but not his relationship with God. David lost the joy of salvation because of his sin with Bathsheba (Ps. 51:12). The very fact that he repented, however, is evidence that he was truly a saved man (read Psalm 51).

Therefore, though we are convinced that it is God's power that keeps us, we also believe that continuance in a godly pattern of life is the evidence of a genuine commitment to Christ.