

Identification With Christ & Victory Over Doubting Our Salvation

***For Those Who Believe in Salvation by Grace and Eternal Security*
But Are Not Sure They Have It!**

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Some Christians struggle with assurance of salvation because of doctrinal issues. This is because they embrace a conditional form of salvation based upon a mixture of works and grace. Like the Galatians, they were saved by grace but then seek to maintain their salvation through a system of legalistic works (Gal. 3:3). This group cannot be sure of their

salvation because they can never know for certain if they have done enough good deeds to secure their salvation before God (Luke 18:18). However, other Christians truly understand that works do not save them (Eph. 2:8-9) and they actually believe in eternal security (John 10:28) but they still struggle with assurance for various reasons.

Spiritual defeat is the key reason for their doubting but the psychological, emotional, and predispositional makeup of their lives can also factor into their lack of assurance. **They continually doubt their salvation by asking subjective questions: "Is my faith real? Was I genuine when I asked Christ to save me? How do I know I'm saved if my faith was a sham?"** They overanalyze everything including their expression of faith in Christ.



They sometime subjectively conclude, "I don't feel saved. I did not have a lot of emotions when I believed on Christ. It's not unusual for me to doubt everything because I'm hardwired this way. Therefore, I am not sure that I'm saved." So here is the type of person who embraces the teachings of salvation by grace and eternal security. And yet, they doubt that they have eternal life and lack the assurance of their

salvation. This is because they live in the SUBJECTIVE world instead of an OBJECTIVE world of truth and spiritual reality.

Of course, there is not much comfort in knowing Christ promises eternal life to every Gospel believer but not knowing you have it. Some Christians trap themselves in a maze of doubt as they question their faith and feelings in relation to their salvation experience. They seem to reason themselves out of assurance and the promise of eternal life through subjective feelings, questions about the genuineness of their faith, etc.

It's true that some Christians might naturally doubt many things and have other idiosyncrasies, characteristics, and self-esteem issues which tend to feed their doubts and create a lack of assurance regarding salvation. But without realizing it, many Christians fail to understand that behind their doubts are sinister beings (the Devil and demons) who are causing them to lack assurance and possess fear regarding the matter of their salvation. **Christians must realize that they are involved in a spiritual battle zone (Eph. 6:12) and Satan always tries to exploit or take advantage of their specific areas of weaknesses and get them to doubt their salvation in Christ.**

Ultimately, there is a spiritual reason behind their doubts. It is Satan who always seeks to counter the truth with lies (Gen. 3:1) and create confusion and uncertainty in the minds of Christians regarding the promise of eternal life. He sends beguiling messages into our mind and attempts to trap us in doubts and confusion regarding our salvation. Sometimes Satan leads us astray when through his deceptive messages he conveys to our minds: "It's too easy to just believe. You must live a better life, make more improvements, to be sure of your salvation." At other times he comes along and says, "Yes, you can believe in Christ's promise of eternal life, but you cannot be sure you have it. This is because your faith is not real; therefore, you cannot be confident that you are saved and possess eternal life." Satan gets us to doubt our salvation in many ways. But remember that these are the "wiles" (tricks and traps) of the Devil (Eph. 6:11). Don't take the bait and get caught in the trap!



Sometimes we conclude, **“I will eventually figure this out. At one point I will get to the place where I will no longer doubt my salvation.”** The truth of the matter is that you don’t have to figure out anything but just keep on believing Christ’s promise of eternal life. You believed in the past at your conversion and at that point you were given eternal salvation (Acts 16:31). Moving forward you must continue to express confidence in Christ’s finished work to save you, not to be resaved repeatedly, but to confirm that your faith is resting in Jesus Christ right now and every day. You can awake in the morning and say, “I am confident in Christ” based upon His promise of “everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Focusing on Christ – not Faith



Some people doubt the sincerity of their faith in Christ for various reasons such as unanswered questions, traumatic experiences, mental health concerns, bereavement, hypocrisy in the church, questioning God’s character and ways, etc). **However, if Satan can cause you to doubt the very foundation of your faith in Christ, then he can paralyze**

you in your spiritual living. God's Word doesn't say that it's wrong for you to have questions or doubts; however, it's what you do with those questions and doubts that matters. We must funnel them through the absolute standard of truth – the Word of God (John 17:17) and remove them from our mind (2 Cor. 10:5) before they bring us into spiritual defeat. Doubt is not comfortable. But don't ignore it. Be honest with yourself and others about it. Allow the tension you feel in your heart and minds because of your doubts to drive you into God's Word and His promises which are the final authority for faith and practice.

If you already know Christ has promised to give you eternal life and you are struggling with the sincerity of your faith in Christ, then you are likely overanalyzing. You can be sure that your faith is real when you keep looking to Christ for eternal life. Your focus must always be on Christ. **“Look unto me, and be ye saved”** (Isa. 45:22). You can be sure that in the past, right now, tomorrow, and the next day that you possess eternal life if you are only looking to Christ to grant you eternal life. The key is that you must keep on looking unto Christ and claim His promise of eternal life (John 6:47). **Don't**

allow the Devil to take your eyes and focus off Christ and put them on your faith. Just keep believing and focusing on Christ's promise – “ye shall never perish” (John 10;28). This will bring assurance.

Remember that Peter began to sink in the water when he took his eyes off Jesus (Matt. 14:30). He had faith or confidence that Christ would allow Him to walk on the water. But when he took his eyes off Jesus and put them on the winds and the waves he started to sink. The same occurs in our life.



We begin to sink into the sea of doubt when we become overly obsessed with our good works and faith as the sole determining factors of our salvation. We must keep our focus on Christ and His promise of eternal life and not be sidetracked into endless speculation regarding the authenticity of our faith and how many good works we must do to determine if our faith was real or genuine. Looking anywhere else (my faith, my works, my church) eventually puts the focus of salvation on “me” (not Christ) and generates doubt but looking unto Jesus results in assurance.

Classical humanism says that doubt, while uncomfortable, is absolutely essential for life. René Descartes said, “If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things.” But contrary to the humanistic view that doubt is essential to life, the Bible says that doubt is a destroyer of our Christian for it makes us spiritual unstable (James 1:5-8). Lacking confidence in Christ's saving work on our behalf is not something necessary; it is a sin, the sin of unbelief (Heb. 12:1) that can overtake our hearts and cause us much stress and insecurity regarding our eternal destiny.

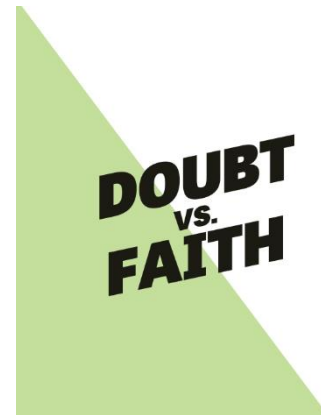
Here is one man's testimony on the matter of doubting. "A few years ago, I had one of those "Ah-ha!" moments that has been life-changing. I realized that my faith is just one of many things I second-guess. I doubt many decisions lonnnnnngggg after I've made them. This is an idiosyncrasy I've possessed from childhood, and I hate it. We're not just talking about important decisions, such as whom I married. I sometimes find myself reconsidering, re-reconsidering, and re-re-reconsidering unimportant decisions, such as items I've purchased: a watch, a car, a bottle of cologne. This recognition alone has been a tremendous help to me in understanding why I doubt: It's the way I'm wired. For me, absolute certainty is an unreasonable expectation."

His end conclusion is wrong. The absolute certainty of our salvation is NOT an "unreasonable expectation" for we have the "word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15) on the matter of our salvation, the promise of Jesus (John 6:47), and the inner witness of the Spirit's work in our hearts (1 John 5:9).

Romans 8:16

"The Spirit itself (*Himself*) beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Hebrews 11:1 opposes doubt and states: "Now faith is the substance (*confidence or certainty*) of things hoped for (*including the hope of eternal life*), the evidence (*conviction that what God said He will perform*) of things not seen" (*we cannot see eternal life but we can believe in it*). **In other words, faith is the antidote to doubt – faith in Christ and His promise of eternal life.** Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The truth and promises of God's Word are the breeding ground for faith. They create faith in our hearts regarding eternal security, God's keeping power ("kept by the power of God" - 1 Pet. 1:5) and promises of eternal life (Rom. 6:23; 1 John 2:25; 5:11, 13; Jude 1:21).



When by faith we embrace the truth of God's Word regarding our eternal security in Christ and God's promise of eternal life, our doubts will fade away. Yes, you can win the battle over doubting your salvation when you keep "looking unto Jesus" (Heb. 12:1) instead of looking at yourself, your predispositions, behavior patterns, feelings, and other psychological flaws

and weaknesses which are often used as an excuse for doubting one's salvation. Luke 14:18 says, "And they all with one consent began to make excuse." There is no valid excuse for doubting your salvation. **God is not interested in your excuses, feelings, views, or opinions.** There is never a good excuse to disobey God and not believe His Word.

Vance Havner said, "An excuse is the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie!"



Again, some Christians struggle with the issue of their faith. They are overly obsessed and fear that their faith in Christ may not be genuine or real. Satan manipulates their minds and causes doubts and fears by getting them to question the sincerity of their faith in Christ. Did they really believe on Christ? Was their heart genuine at the time? Without realizing it, Christians can begin to actually "**place faith in their faith**" instead of simply looking to Christ and express simple faith of confidence in His promise of eternal life (John 3:14-15). The moment we get our eyes off Christ, we can very easily become deceived. So, keep looking unto Jesus (Heb. 12:2) and you will possess assurance. Turn your eyes upon Jesus!

No one will ever possess assurance about their salvation if they continue to ask, "What if." "What if my faith is not real?" So how do I overcome these doubts? It's not very difficult. **Stop asking "What if."** Of course, those who have experienced a gripping fear know that this is harder than it seems. What should those do who suffer from the "what if" of unbelief, those who doubt the genuineness of their faith and therefore doubt their salvation? The antidote is easy. **Believe! Only believe!** In fact, every morning and everyday believe in the promise of Christ which He gave concerning eternal life (John 3:15-16). I don't mean you must be repeatedly saved over and over again, but you must continue to believe in the promise that Jesus gave so you can know that you have eternal life (1 John 5:13).

This will remove unbelief from your heart and replace it with everyday confidence in Christ.

If you are struggling with the issue regarding your faith, you must remember that Christians are to possess the confidence that Heaven is their destiny (2 Cor. 5:8). This means we must walk by faith and not be sight (2 Cor. 5:7) because we cannot visibly see Heaven, Jesus, and our future destiny. But this does not matter for faith in God's inspired, inerrant, and infallible truth reveals that our future destiny is sure. Of course, faith is not "belief without proof" (a blind leap into the dark) as skeptics teach.



Many skeptics today echo Thomas' sentiment: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). *We must not behave as unbelievers do and not believe since we have all the proof we need to believe – God's promise of eternal life.* When our faith is rooted in the truth of God's Word (Rom. 10:17), it will be built up and become strong and confident, as we remain focused on the good news of the Gospel, what Christ has done for us to give us eternal salvation. **Continued confidence in Christ results in assurance of eternal life.** Walking by faith in Christ's promise of eternal life will result in assurance, not walking according to our feelings, failures, fears, and focusing on ourselves and doubts.

Here is a testimonial of a Christian struggling with assurance of salvation: "I was really struggling, and I eventually started to sense that these doubts were an attack by Satan, meant to cripple my faith. And his attack was working because, although I was beginning to believe these doubts were unfounded, I still couldn't banish them. Until I turned to the Bible.

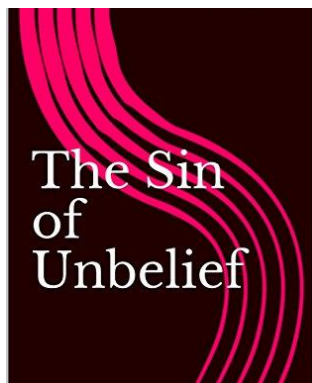
"I started writing down verses that discussed salvation – verses such as Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" and Acts 16:31 "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." I created an ever-growing list of verses such as these and started to claim God's promises.

“Whenever doubts would assail me, I would get out my list and start reading. I would read Romans 10:13 and remind myself that I had called up the name of the Lord so I was saved. I would read Acts 16:31 and remind myself that God does not lie, so if I believe on Jesus I am saved. As I read and claimed these verses, I would find peace.

“The doubts did not go away overnight, but they started to become fewer and farther between. Soon I was going days without doubts then weeks and finally months. I can’t pinpoint a specific time when I stopped doubting, but I praise the Lord that I haven’t doubted His saving work in my life for years.”

The Sin of Unbelief

Although doubts may pass through our minds, we must not act upon them and harbor them in our hearts but remove them quickly. If we begin to live with doubts and fears regarding our salvation and are overcome by them, then we have fallen into the sin and trap of unbelief.



Hebrews 12:1 reveals that doubt or unbelief as a sin: **“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed (surrounded) about with so great a cloud of witnesses (the Old Testament saints of Hebrews 11 which expressed great faith in God), let us lay aside every weight (the things in life that weigh us down and keep us from excelling spiritually), and the sin (the sin of unbelief and doubting, failing to believe in God’s sufficiency and promises) which doth so easily beset (entangle) us, and let us run with patience (perseverance, endurance, God’s staying power) the race that is set before us.”**

This can mean sin in any form, but in the context, it is especially pointing to the **sin of unbelief** (*opposite of the faith of the Old Testament saints explained in chapter 11*). We must have complete trust in the promises of God which include His promise of eternal life if we are going to stay in the race of the Christian life and keep winning (being victorious). This means we must not allow the sin of unbelief (lacking assurance of our salvation) to entangle our lives. Instead, we can yield to God and His truth, claim the victory over our doubts or unbelief, and win the race. Right now you can claim God’s promise of eternal life and be victorious over doubting your salvation. You can choose to believe and not doubt!

John 6:47

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

John 10:28

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

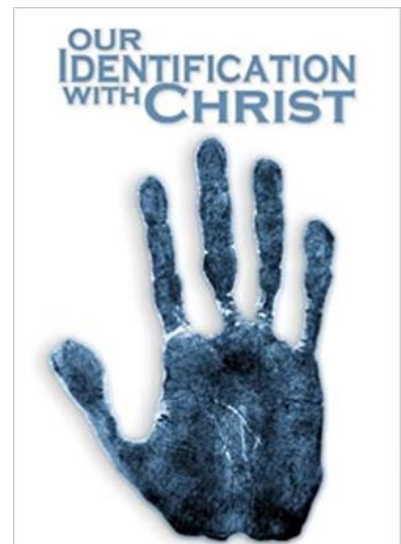
Remember that you cannot lose your salvation, but you can lose the JOY of it when you keep doubting God’s promise of eternal life. David said long ago: “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit” (Ps. 51:12). If you have lost the joy of the salvation that God provided for you, there is only one way to get it back. You must confess your sin of doubting and place full confidence in Christ’s keeping power and promise.

Victory Through Identification with Christ

Within our daily Christian life, we must yield to God’s victorious truths concerning our identification with Christ, accept them as being true and never changing, and claim our victory over doubting our salvation. Without totally surrendering or yielding to these sanctifying truths within God’s Word, we cannot possess assurance of salvation.

So when Satan is working to get you to doubt your salvation, gaining victory over your doubting becomes a classic case of spiritual warfare. Yes, assurance of salvation involves simply believing what God says. But sometimes assurance of salvation is gained through obtaining victory over the Devil’s lies and wearing the armor of God.

The problem with many Christians today is that they have an identity crisis. They don’t understand their identity with Christ and how this relates to gaining assurance over their salvation.



First, there is identification with Christ as is relates to **SALVATION**. Instead of identifying with Christ and their positional acceptance and peace before God’s throne, they would rather identify with their feelings, personalities, imperfections, and their flawed perceptions of

themselves. Our identity in Christ means WHO WE ARE in Christ, how the Father sees or views us through the saving merits of Jesus Christ. Each Gospel believer possesses legal forgiveness (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14) and imputed (reckoned, credited) righteousness (Rom. 4:5-8, 11, 22-24; 5:1; 8:1; Gal. 3:6) through the death of Christ on our behalf, which God gives to us out of His grace. FORGIVEN and RIGHTEOUS before God's throne is our identity in Christ.

This means that through Christ's death we are reckoned or charged as being forgiven and through justification we are reckoned or charged as being legally righteous before God's throne. This is our identity in Christ. God places His Son's righteousness on our legal account or record in Heaven. God goes to the record book where all our sins have been recorded and erases all our past sins and equally provides acquittal for all our future sins. He then makes certain that nothing else (no other sin) is written on that page in the future by filling it with the perfect righteousness of His own Son! In other words, through our union with Christ we are spiritually identified with and therefore share in everything He has provided for us (legal forgiveness, justification or perfect righteousness before God's throne, redemption, reconciliation).



Second, there is identification with Christ as it relates to **SANCTIFICATION** and victory. Once again, instead of identifying with Christ's victory over sin (including unbelief or doubting our salvation) many Christians would rather identify and surrender to their feelings, their own personal dispositions, and predispositions, their personalities, and general characteristics as a person. In fact, they basically use these things as excuses, and they become a barrier to getting victory over their doubts.

The Bible teaches that we are also identified with Christ's victory over sin and Satan which He acquired for us on the cross and through His death and resurrection. This victory provides us with sanctification for our daily living so we can live victoriously over sin and doubts regarding our salvation (Rom. 6:1-15).

The Bible teaches every Gospel believer has died, was buried, and has been risen with Christ and therefore shares in His victory over sin and Satan. Spiritual baptism or spiritual union with Christ is the secret for obtaining assurance when you are doubting and being manipulated by Satan. Our

WATER baptism is a picture of our SPIRITUAL baptism (union with Christ). Our baptism into Christ (being placed in union with Christ) means that in the reckoning of God, the believer has died with Christ, was buried with Christ, and has risen with Him.

The spiritual baptism places us in union with Christ (identifying us with Christ) and gives us the promise of three victorious truths.

- ✓ **The old person we used to be under the power of sin has died with Christ.**

Romans 6:6, **“Knowing this, that our old man (the unsaved and defeated person we used to be under sin’s power and unbelief in Adam) is crucified with him (has been put to death with Christ and therefore defeated), that the body of sin might be destroyed (that sin might be rendered powerless over our bodies and lives which once ruled, owned, and enslaved us), that henceforth we should not serve sin”** (so we can be victorious over all sins including the sin of unbelief – doubting Christ’s provision of salvation).



We **“have been planted together in the likeness of his death”** (Romand 6:5). This means we have died to our enslavement to sin which includes our doubts regarding our salvation. We are **“baptized into His death”** (Rom. 6:3) which means that Christ broke the power of sin

over our lives through His death, and we share in this victory. The result is that we must no longer be ruled by sin (Romans 6:3). **We are actually dead to doubts! I AM NO LONGER A DOUBTER FOR THE OLD DOUBTER DIED WITH CHRIST.** Therefore, when applying this truth to our lack of assurance, we can say, “I’m dead to the sin of doubting and claim my victory in Christ.”

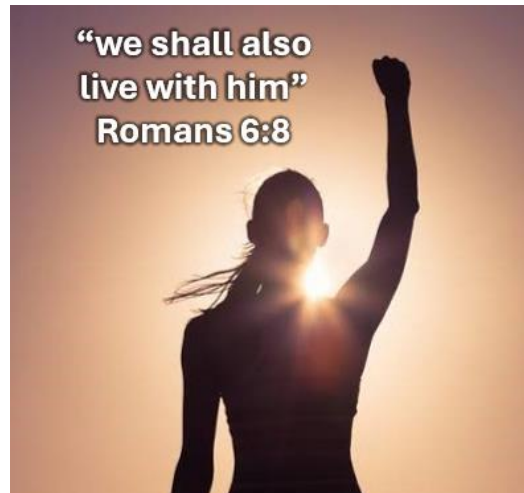
- ✓ **The old person we used to be was buried with Christ** (proving the finality of our death with Christ and freedom from sin’s slavery).



We also were “**buried with him**” (Rom. 6:4) which reassures us of our death to sin’s slavery and power. We are a dead man in relation to the power of sin running our lives and therefore we must no longer live with doubts regarding what God has said concerning our eternal security. **We should bury our doubts in the grave with Christ!** We can conclude, “I am buried with Christ, proving beyond a shadow of a doubt that I am dead to the sin of doubting. I no longer must question my salvation. The old unsaved person I used to be, possessing no faith in God and His promises, has been buried with Christ. It’s gone!”

✓ **The new person has emerged because we are risen with Christ.**

The Bible says, “**we shall also live with him**” (Romans 6:8); “**we have been raised up from the dead**” (Rom. 6:4) and are now in “**the likeness of his resurrection**” (Rom. 6:5). This means we are now born-again sharing Christ’s daily power to overcome any sin, including the sin of doubting our salvation. We are living with Christ (possessing a dynamic spiritual union with Him). We are a newly born-again, resurrected, and transformed person in Christ sharing the victorious power of the risen Christ.



In our union or identification with Christ’s resurrection we become a brand-new person, a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). This wonderful resurrection reality speaks of our union with Christ, sharing His resurrection life and power so we can gain victory over any sin that plagues and haunts our lives. The lack of faith regarding our salvation can be overcome if we reckon ourselves to be dead to all sin and unbelief and rely upon the victorious power that Christ provides for us on a daily basis. We can trust in Christ’s power to change our thought patterns and reassure us of the truth regarding our eternal security.

Again, it should be noted that our water baptism is a picture of Spirit baptism which places us into a union and identity with Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27). Water baptism is an outward symbol of an inward experience. Paul is not saying that their immersion in water put us “into Jesus Christ” for this is accomplished by the Spirit when we believe on Christ. Our immersion (water baptism) is a picture of what the Spirit did: the Holy Spirit immersed us in Christ - identified us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

The important thing is that you prayerfully apply to your life WHO YOU ARE in Christ so that you can get the victory over doubting your faith, doubting Christ’s promise of eternal life, and doubting God’s faithfulness (1 Cor. 1:9; Lam. 3:22-23).



Here is a threefold cord which cannot be easily broken: **DEAD, BURIED, RISEN (alive in Christ)**. *The old unsaved and unregenerate person I used to be is dead to sin (the sin of unbelief). It is buried and gone and cannot enslave me anymore, I am alive in Christ, sharing His life and power for victory.* This is the formula you need to claim

so we can overcome any sinful departure from the truth, including doubting the finished work of Christ on the cross, or even struggling with doubts concerning the genuineness of your faith. *Christ will give you victory over your doubts, your emotional instability, your personality, your predispositions, your syndrome's and anything that stands in the way of your assurance of salvation.* You must trust in the victory He already provides for you and claim His transforming power for your life today. **You are dead to doubts and sin through your identity in Christ.**

Galatians 2:20 states:

“I am (have been) crucified with Christ: *(the old unsaved person we used to be under the power and enslavement to sin has been put to death – my doubts regarding salvation died with Christ)* **nevertheless I live** *(we are alive in Christ, sharing in His complete victory over sin and His daily power to give me daily victory over my doubts);* **yet not I** *(not in my own strength or human effort),* **but Christ liveth in me** *(Christ shares His life and dynamic power with us):* **and the life which I now live in the flesh (my body) I live by the faith of the Son of God** *(my personal choice and decision to trust in His power and provision for victory over our doubts regarding salvation),* **who**

loved me, and gave himself for me” (*who died to grant me eternal salvation*).

Living with assurance of your salvation, getting victory over your doubting, is really a faith issue. God does not want us to be a doubting Thomas. He wants us to rest fully on His promise – the promise of eternal life. You must live by placing your complete trust in the power and provision of Jesus Christ (His death and resurrection power) to grant you the victory over these doubts. When aligning the power of Christ with the word of Christ who promised to give you eternal life (John 6:47), you have the formula for victory over doubting.

Here is the wonderful liberating truth. In view of our identification (union) with Christ we are no longer the unsaved/unregenerate person we used to be outside Christ. We have been baptized (immersed) into Christ (sharing this victorious union with Him) and therefore share in His complete and total provision for us over sin. You must understand that your spiritual union or identification with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection assures you of the victory over any sin – including the sin of unbelief (Heb. 12:1).

As a result, we can “**walk in newness of life**” (Rom. 6:4) when applying these identifying (union) truths to our lives when we are tempted to doubt our salvation. The application of these truths occurs through yielding to God as your Master and claiming the victory He has provided for us in Christ (Rom. 6:13). *I’m convinced that many struggling Christians do not realize that gaining assurance over their salvation is ultimately a victory encounter.* They must yield to God as their Master by claiming their identity in Christ – their victory through their union with His death, burial, and resurrection life. They must surrender to God and the victory that God has provided and promised them through Christ. They are dead to sin’s power and through identification with the living Christ they have been given complete victory over every sin, including doubting their salvation.

Paul taught in Philippians 3:10: “**That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection...**” This means we can experience the same power that raised Christ from the dead because we now share Christ’s risen life and power by possessing a dynamic union with Him. This means that we have the continual power of God operating in our lives to enable us to be victorious over anything that is defeating our spiritual lives.

We can prayerfully apply these identifying truths to our lives when we are being tempted to sin and doubt our salvation. Here is a sample PRAYER.



Dear God, I yield to You as My Master trusting in Your victorious provision through Jesus Christ. I yield myself and doubts to You, claiming the victory over them through my spiritual identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. I believe the old person I used to be has died to the power of sin through Christ's death. I also claim that the old person I used to be has been buried with Christ in the grave. This reassures me of my death to sin's slavery and power. I AM DEAD TO DOUBTING. My doubts were buried in the grave with Jesus Christ and I am now trusting in the dynamic power of the risen Son of God to grant me victory right now over my doubting. Through my identify with Christ I am no longer a doubter but a victor. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Faith, Facts, Feelings & Fickleness

Assurance is based on FACTS and FAITH – not FEELINGS and FICKLNESS (frequent changes in thinking and behavior).

1 John 5:4

“For whatsoever is born of God (*the human spirit*) overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.”

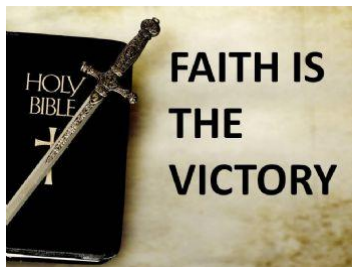
In other words, the way we began the Christian life should be the way we continue to live it – by faith! We trusted Christ to be our Savior to begin our salvation and we must trust Him to be our Savior as we continue to go through life. It boils down to faith. Do I believe that Christ saved me in the past when I initially placed faith in Him? If so, I must continue to believe and place confidence in Christ as my Savior. His sufficient death will maintain my salvation and acceptance before God (Heb. 7:26).



The Bible does not teach that feelings are the victory over doubting your salvation. Faith is the victory. Your feelings can fluctuate and deceive you. Your emotional makeup can vary. God's commands to believe Him and His promise of eternal life are

directed to our wills, not our emotions. **He does not say, “Believe this if you feel like it.”** Of course, this does not mean that feelings are not part of your Christian life and commitment to the Lord. The right order to obtain and experience victory begins with the FACTS which are comparable to a locomotive on a train. FAITH then follows the facts and FEELINGS are the caboose.

Here is the point. Your feelings and emotions must always align with the factual propositions of Scripture regarding your salvation and eternal security and your faith must be rooted in these facts. **Victory over doubting your salvation is a truth encounter – not a feeling encounter.** Your victory over doubting your salvation and the free gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23) is not a SUBJECTIVE experience but one that is to be rooted in OBJECTIVE truth. **One thing is certain, without faith you will flop! You can commit emotional idolatry with your feelings, personality, predisposition, and other physical limitations. But these types of things are nothing more than excuses which can become idol-like in your life (1 John 5:21).** You can yield to these excuses instead of possessing faith in God’s truth of eternal life (John 3:36) and these types of things will keep you from gaining victory over doubting your salvation.



Again, faith is the victory – not feelings! Faith is the victory – not fickleness. Do you possess a fickle personality? In other words, are you characterized by frequent changes in opinions or decisions, often without good reason. Then you are like the man that James talks about.

Let’s apply James 1:6-8 to the matter of our salvation and eternal security: **“But let him ask in faith (as we pray, we are to keep on believing in God’s provision and promise of eternal salvation, thanking Him for His security and keeping power), nothing wavering (without hesitation, without doubting God). For he that wavereth (who is undecided and doubting) is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed (a picture of instability). For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord (we cannot receive assurance if we doubt God and His Word). A double minded man (a person who has a divided opinion, who doubts, who lacks assurance) is unstable in all his ways” (his thinking, living, and theology).**

Being doubleminded results in spiritual instability and sometimes spiritual paralysis. If we cannot believe in God then who can we believe?

1

First, we are to always pray in faith believing God will do what He says! We must by faith claim the promise of eternal security and eternal life that God gave to us (John 3:16; 6:47; 10:28; 1 Pet. 1:5; Heb. 13:5). Faith means we realize and believe that nothing is impossible with God which means that Christ can keep us and maintain our salvation before God. God can do anything but fail! He won't fail us. 1 Thessalonians 5:24 says, "Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*."

The opposite of faith is fickleness. People with fickle personalities may be indecisive, doubt, be easily swayed by external influence and feelings. They may welcome wisdom and knowledge but never believe any truism is indisputable. In other words, they might in the back of their minds foster doubt that something is true.

2

Second, sometimes we can pray with hesitation – not really believing God's promise of eternal life and security. James says we should pray with "nothing wavering." Have you been a wavy Christian? Sometimes we believe and the next time we doubt God's sufficiency, power, and promise of eternal life? We must be careful about falling into the Doubting Thomas routine!

If we question God's goodness, power, and promise we will have no stability in the time when the Devil tempts us to doubt our salvation and God's promise of eternal life. One minute we might be resting calmly on His promise, but the next minute we will feel that God has forgotten to be kind and gracious to us. One minute we are by faith trusting in His promise of eternal security and possess great joy and peace and the next minute we are a train wreck because we once again begin to doubt. God does not want us to live a yo-yo type of Christian life (the up and down effect) moving from belief (assurance) to unbelief (lack of assurance). He wants us to learn stability in relation to our assurance of salvation (Col. 2:7; James 5:8).





A wavering and double-minded person (James 1:6) means we possess divided thinking, decisions, motives, and attitudes – believing God and His promise one moment and then not believing Him and forgetting His promise the next moment. type of Christian. James illustrates this type of wavy faith as the surge of the sea, rising to great heights, then falling back into the

ocean and the valleys – troubled and tossed about (James 1:6). Is this a picture of your life today? Are you troubled and tossed about the matter of your salvation and eternal security? We can become spiritually unstable when we lack faith in God’s promise of eternal life.

Warren Wiersbe said:

“Many Christians live like corks on the waves: up one minute, down the next; tossed back and forth. This kind of experience is evidence of immaturity.”

When we are wavering as we pray, it means we are hesitating, doubting, or staggering about – not fully trusting in God’s sufficiency, power, and promise of eternal life. Wavering (doubting) is NOT to characterize our praying and faith in God’s promises. Some call this “drunken praying” because the person staggers like a drunk at the promises of God and His ability to do what He says. We must grow in our maturity and stop being tossed back and forth on the sea of subjectivity, feeling, flawed perceptions, and doubt.

If we are not careful, we can move from faith to doubting God, believing to no longer believing, living on the mountaintop and then falling into the valley. James is teaching that the shifting ocean surf corresponds to the Christian, who by NOT submitting consistently to the promise of God concerning eternal life, is driven by forces *outside* himself (His own ideas, feelings, emotions, personality, the Devil) rather than being directed by the Holy Spirit *within* and the promise of God’s faithfulness to His Word (1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Pet. 1:19; Heb. 10:23; Ps. 93:5). 2 Corinthians 1:20 declares: “For all the promises of God in him (*in Christ*) are yea, and in him Amen (*true, sure, and faithful*), unto the glory of God by us.”

Beware of turning into a rollercoaster Christian when it comes to possessing assurance of your salvation and believing in God's promise of eternal life. A consistent Christian keeps on believing and thanking God for his salvation! *God is not honored by the kind of faith that alternates between optimism and pessimism.*



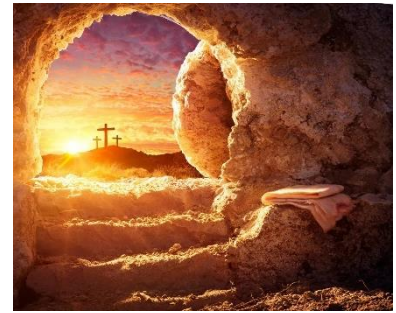
Because of God's repeated promises of eternal life and eternal security we can be a spiritual optimist and not pessimist.

God does not want us to possess a flip-flop type of faith. The point James 1:6-8 is that we must always pray in faith with no doubting. We keep on believing that God is there for us, that His power and promises are sufficient to maintain our salvation, that His peace and joy is available to us, and that His purpose will never fail us! The message of James is this. **Keep on believing!** God's promises never change! They cannot fail. We are called upon to have faith in the Lord for "**God is faithful**" (1 Cor. 1:9). God can be trusted, which means what He says about eternal life and security are true (Heb. 13:5; 1 Pet. 1:5). Titus 1:2 says we can live "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

Sometimes doubting is not so much a THEOLOGICAL issue in a person's mind or heart but a FAITH issue. As previously mentioned, Christians might truly believe they are saved without works and believe in eternal security but because of the physical, emotional, and spiritual things going on in their lives, their faith fluctuates back and forth on the issue of assurance. But it must be understood that no person should yield to his or her feelings or fickleness for none of them are reliable. You must yield to God and the truth instead of yielding to doubts regarding your salvation, depression, and distrust of the truth.

You might say, "But I'm hardwired to doubt." Well, if that is what you really think, so be it, but don't yield to it! Say no to your personality and personification of yourself and yield to God. Don't give excuses for living in doubt – yield to God and surrender to the truth for it will set you free from doubting your salvation (John 8:32; 1 John 5:11-13).

This brings us back to the dynamic and life-changing truth of Romans chapter 6. We are...



DEAD WITH CHRIST

BURIED WITH CHRIST

RISEN WITH CHRIST!

We have died to the sin of unbelief, it was buried in Christ's grave, and now we can live a new life of victory over unbelief (doubting our salvation) through our identification with Christ's resurrection power. Romans chapter six reminds us that the key to gaining assurance involves claiming our identity in Christ and the spiritual victory that we already possess in Christ, so we don't keep doubting our salvation. We must yield to God as our Master and claim our victory in Christ over every sin, including the sin of doubting the sufficiency of Christ's saving work on the cross. **Yield your body and mind to God as your Master by claiming WHO YOU ARE in Christ. You are no longer a doubter but a victor! THE OLD DOUBTER IS DEAD!** In other words, your enslavement to doubts died with Christ and was buried with Christ. You are not alive in Christ sharing in His resurrection power. Stop doubting!



Romans 6:13 declares: "**Neither yield ye your members** (the members of your body which include your mind – the way you think) **as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin** (which includes yielding to unbelief, doubting your salvation and God's promise of eternal life is a sin – Heb. 12:1): **but yield yourselves unto God** (yield to God as your

Master, putting Him first in your life, giving Him the right to rule your thought life, and therefore yield to His power and promise of victory over your doubts regarding salvation and eternal life through Christ), as those that are alive from the dead (as those who have been made spiritually alive or born again and who are now sharing Christ's risen life and power so you can have victory over your doubts), and your members (our body members) as instruments of righteousness unto God" (if we yield our minds to God as

our Master, we will ultimately yield or surrender to His power and promise to keep us saved and we will possess victory over doubting by claiming our victorious identity in Christ).

Yes, Romans 6:13 commands us to even yield our mind or brain (the way we think) to God so we can obtain victory over our lack of assurance.

This means we must surrender our doubts to God which are generated in our minds, while at the same time we must yield or



physiological and psychological quirks to God and bow the knee to the truth that we have eternal life. We come to the Lord with faith, openness, and sincerity and say, “I believe; help mine unbelief” (Mark 9:24). When doubting, we must immediately surrender our physical emotions, personal feelings, our opinions, disposition to doubting, and our negative and improper thinking to God, to His way, truth, promise, and victory, and keep on claiming our eternal security in Christ. **Instead of yielding to the temptation to doubt our salvation, we must yield to God as our Master and Deliverer and claim our victory through our identification with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. We are victors and winners – not doubters and losers!**

“Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin;
Each vict’ry will help you,
Some other to win;
Fight valiantly onward,
Evil passions subdue;
Look ever to Jesus,
He will carry you through.”

Someone wrote:

“One of my idiosyncrasies is that I’m a perpetual second-guesser. I seem to question just about everything. I don’t want to make a bad decision, even in some very insignificant matters. So, it just makes sense that I often have doubts pertaining to decisions in significant matters. It’s not an intentional exercise. In fact, it’s downright frustrating to me. But it’s the way I’m wired.”

Maybe so, but you must still surrender your will, idiosyncrasies, and second-guesses to God for He is your Master, and depend upon the way of victory He provides for you through identification with His Son Jesus Christ. God can grant us victory over who we are, over our doubts, and realign our thinking with His. But without yielding to the way of victory, we won't change and we won't have assurance.

We must remember once again that Jesus promised in John 6:47: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

Just as salvation comes from believing in Christ alone, so does assurance. As we continue to trust in Christ's perfect sacrifice as the payment for our sins throughout our Christian life, the certainty and sunshine of Christ's message of eternal life floods into hearts. The word "believe" is in the present tense which means that the way you begin your Christian life (believing on Christ for eternal life) is the way you continue to live the Christian life (you keep on believing on Christ for eternal life). This is how you have assurance. You know that you are believing on Christ to give you eternal life right now and you keep on believing this same promise. If you keep believing the promise "right now" and the next day, and the day after that, you will stop falling into the Devil's trap of doubting your salvation.

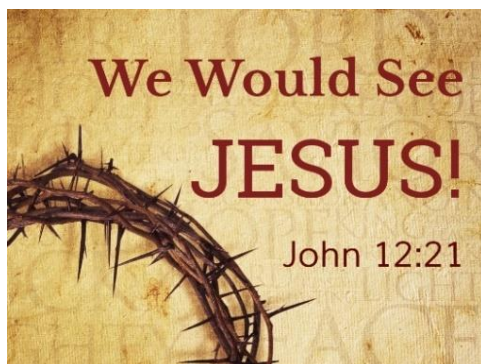
Mind Manipulation



I repeat: For some Christians, doubting their salvation is not a theological issue; it's a believing issue (Heb. 12:1). Once again, many Christians realize that their works cannot save them (Titus 3:5) and that God has promised to give them eternal life (John 3:16), but they are plagued with doubts regarding whether their faith was real at the time they trusted Christ. As a result, *overintellectualizing or overanalyzing takes the place of believing.* **To state is succinctly, some Christians wonder if their faith was real when they first believed on Christ – or the second, third, fourth and fifth time they believed on Christ for salvation.** They keep doubting the genuine nature of their faith and this causes them to spiral out of control from a faith perspective and lack assurance of their salvation.

Some think they need to have a great emotional response when they become a Christian in order for their faith to be real. But repentance (Acts 17:30) means we change our mind about our sin, realizing it is an offense against God and this leads us to place genuine faith in Christ. The level of the sorrow that accompanies all repentance (2 Cor. 7:10) varies among people. **We are not saved by our feelings but through belief in Christ.** Our sincerity at the time we express faith in Christ is not based on the level of our feelings, crying, and other emotional elements (a chill must run down your back, there must be a feeling of euphoria, pleasure, or excitement).

Instead of looking back and doubting your sincerity, look to Christ right now, trust Him today, tomorrow, etc. The “Was my faith real” syndrome is really a disguise for “unbelief” (Heb. 12:1), not in the sense that you have not trusted in Christ to be your Savior, but that you cannot have assurance when you keep doubting your faith. Remember that when you doubt you do without (you cannot have assurance). **The antidote for questioning the sincerity of your faith is to focus on Christ – not your faith.** Looking to Christ today and believing He is your Savior (John 3:14-15) and believing in His promise of eternal life (John 3:16) will confirm the sincerity of your faith. And this will hold true for the next day, and the next day, and the next day, etc.



The point is that you don't need to keep doubting and asking Christ to save you, but rather keep on believing in the fact that He did save you and maintain your level of assurance by keeping your eyes on Christ (not the level of your faith in the past, today, or in the future). Just keep looking to Christ and this will strengthen your faith and assurance. **“We would see Jesus” (John**

12:21) needs to be our approach to maintaining our assurance. Our focus must be on Christ.

“Open our eyes, Lord,
We want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch him,
And say that we love him.
Open our ears, Lord,
And help us to listen.
Open our eyes, Lord,
We want to see Jesus!”

What brings assurance into our hearts? Seeing Christ on the cross, seeing Christ risen from the dead, and seeing Christ at the right hand of God interceding for us as our great High Priest to save us to “the uttermost” (Heb. 7:25). Right now Christ is declaring the sufficiency of His sacrifice on our behalf and confirming our legal forgiveness and righteousness before God.



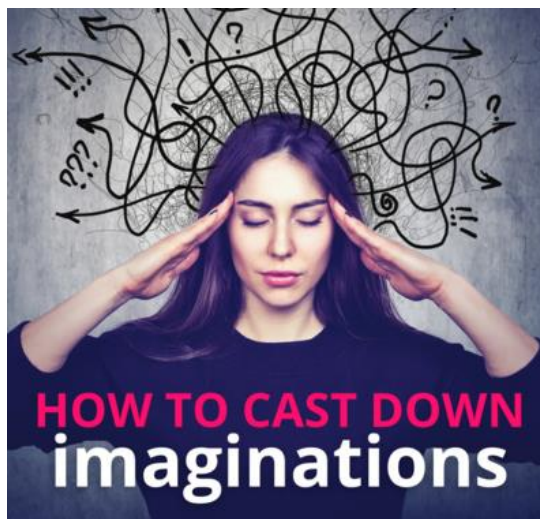
“And now for me He stands, Before the Father’s throne,
He shows His wounded hands, And names me as His own.”

Instead of doubting you can be looking unto Jesus and what He is doing for you right now in Heaven. You can be absolutely certain of your salvation if you keep looking to Christ instead of reexamining and doubting your faith. The secret is always looking to Christ!



Satan often plays with your mind, manipulating your thinking in this specific area and arena of temptation (doubting your faith was real). I want to suggest that you stop playing “mental gymnastics” with yourself and not allow the Devil to cloud your thinking in this area of your faith. If you have personally asked Christ to save you, if you have transferred your trust to Him, then you are saved! You must cut through the feelings, doubts, mind manipulations, and claim the truth that you have believed on Christ for the free gift of eternal life.

Stop trying to put “faith in your faith” by asking, “Was my faith real? or “Was I genuine when I asked Christ to save me?” Instead of always reexamining your faith keep funneling your faith to Christ and His finished work on the cross. Our faith is to be in Christ - not in our faith! As we previously confirmed, we are to keep “looking unto Jesus” (Heb. 12:2) and not at ourselves, our doubts, and our feelings. **We are not saved by our feelings but by faith in Christ.** Don’t allow Satan to play mind games with you regarding how you felt when you were saved and the genuineness of your belief. You are not a puppet on a string! If you have placed your faith in Christ, then you are saved and saved forever. Once saved – always saved!



2 Corinthians 10:5 tells us how to stop Satan from manipulating our minds. It informs us how we can stop doubting whether our faith is sincere, if we have done enough good works to confirm our faith is genuine, and ultimately how we can stop doubting our salvation. The way to assurance is this: **“Casting down imaginations, (imploding or destroying the reasonings or decisions that are hostile to our Christian faith) and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God (exalted thoughts**

of pride and independence which are against God’s character, ways, and truth), and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (surrendering our thoughts to the lordship of Jesus Christ – His way, truth, and mastery over our lives).

In surrendering our thoughts to Christ, we are replacing them with truth and allowing Jesus Christ to be lord of our lives – not doubts. Remember that when we are thinking thoughts that are **“against the knowledge of God”** (His character, ways, and promises) this can also lead to doubting your salvation. Therefore, you need to have a Biblical picture of God and realize that He is always true to His promises including the promise of eternal life. He can be trusted. He is always just and loving. Nothing that happens to you occurs outside His plan and purpose for your life. In Jeremiah 29:11 God says, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

In short, we must get rid of the doubtful thoughts in our minds regarding God, our salvation, and the genuine nature of our faith by surrendering all of these plaguing and enslaving thoughts to Christ (His truth and promise about eternal life). **This is an act of obedience!** We must yield or surrender ourselves to God, committing our minds and hearts to Christ’s promise of eternal life (John 6:47) and replace the bad with the good. Victory involves cleansing our mind of the wrong thoughts (imploding them) and replacing our mind with the right thoughts. If you don’t change the way you think, you won’t change the way you view your salvation.

The Spirit of a Sound Mind

When we destroy the wrong thoughts, we won't continually be plagued with a spirit of fear, the fear of losing our salvation or not knowing we have it. Instead, we will possess a sound mind on these matters. 2 Timothy 1:7 declares: "**For God hath not given us the spirit of fear** (*don't be a coward possessing fear and doubts regarding the loss of your salvation or that your faith may not be real*); **but of power** (*be a strong warrior in God's unlimited strength to gain victory over your doubts*), **and of love** (*be in love with God and His truth which casts our fear and doubts – 1 John 4:18*), **and of a sound mind**" (*be committed to possessing a disciplined mind*).



The disciplined mind is the victorious mind that is free from fear and doubts. Each Gospel believer must learn to yield to God to achieve victory over doubting. *Instead of yielding to our fluctuating feelings, our predisposition to doubts, our personality, or other excuses for not having assurance, we must yield to God and surrender to His truth.* Yielding to God for victory over doubting and claiming His promise of eternal life is the way to maintain assurance.

The secret to living the Christian life is surrendering (yielding) everything to the Lord. This includes our minds and doubts.

Romans 12:1-2

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies (*including our minds – how we think*) **a living sacrifice** (*in complete surrender*), **holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing** (*renovation*) **of your mind** (*by replacing our doubts regarding salvation with God's truth regarding eternal life*), that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

We cannot know that we have eternal life unless we surrender to God's promise and truth which He gave to us (John 3:16; 6:47). We must surrender our wills, our personality traits, our idiosyncrasies, our minds, doubts, our future – everything must be surrendered to God if we want to know and embrace His truth and will for our lives. We must say, "I surrender all" and in

doing so we will deny our doubts and follow Christ's teaching on this important truth.

Luke 9:23

“And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me (to follow Christ and do His will), let him deny himself (he says no to his own thoughts, sins, personal belief systems, and even his unbelief in God's promise of eternal life), and take up his cross daily (a picture of surrender and sacrifice of everything to Christ – our will, ways, and wrong thoughts), and follow me” (Christ's ways and truth).

Someone wrote in a Christian song:

“And I thank you, Lord,
With each trial I feel inside,
That you're there to help, lead and guide
Me away from wrong.
'Cause you promised, Lord,
That with every testing,
That your way of escaping is, easier to bear.

And I thank you, Lord,
For the victory that growing brings.
In surrender of everything
Life is so worth while.
And I thank you, Lord,
That when everything's put in place,
Out in front I can see your face,
And it's there you belong.”

You can be sure that God will help and enable you to follow the right path and believe the right things (Phil. 2:13). But we must be determined in our hearts to do what is right and believe what is right.

Somone said:

“I had a choice to go back or to go forward...So I went forward.”

Living in defeat by being overcome with doubts regarding your salvation means you choose to go backward. Living victoriously over these doubts is a choice to move forward. The truth of the matter is this. **You don't have to live in a perpetual spiritual brain fog regarding the assurance of your**

salvation. You can claim your victory over these doubts. The only way to do this is to keep on praying and keep on believing in the promise of eternal life so you don't fall to Satan's temptations to doubt.

Here is another PRAYER you can pray when the doubts come.

Dear God, I yield myself to Jesus Christ and the victory You have provided for me over the sin of unbelief in doubting my salvation. I surrender my doubts to You and the truth that Christ has given me eternal life. At this very moment, I continue to reclaim and believe in the promise that Jesus gave me regarding eternal life.



I believe the promise - not my feelings or doubts which come from the Devil. I actively place my faith in the truth. I claim this promise right now: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). In a state of sound thinking, I know that I have placed personal faith in Your Son for the free gift of eternal life. I will not allow Satan to manipulate my thinking on this matter. I know that I have in complete sincerity placed my trust in Jesus Christ to be my Savior and I refuse to be moved from the faith position to an unbelieving position.

Right now, I am surrendering any doubts that I have to the authority of your Word and the promise that Jesus gave regarding eternal life. I will keep on believing and bask in the sunshine of Your promise that I have salvation through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. I will keep on claiming Christ's promise of eternal life (John 3:6; 6:47). I will keep on yielding to Your power for victory over doubting. I will keep on believing in the promise of eternal life, I will keep on claiming my security in Christ. Through my identity in Christ, I AM DEAD TO DOUBTING! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Watch and Pray

Jesus taught in Matthew 26:41: "**Watch and pray** (*stay spiritually alert and vigilant by maintaining your prayer life and claiming your victory in Christ*), **that ye enter not into temptation** (*that temptation does not catch you off guard*)



and you lose the battle): the spirit indeed is willing (our own will and strength to do what is right can be strong and noble), but the flesh is weak” (we can be physically, emotionally, and psychologically weak).

Ephesians 6:18

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication (*petitioning and pleading to God for our spiritual needs*) in the Spirit (*under the Spirit’s guidance*), and watching thereunto (*spiritual vigilance*) with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

John R. Rice used to say:

“Every failure is a prayer failure.”

This is because we don’t prayerfully remain alert to Satan’s temptations and depend upon God for victory. We often want to do the right thing but find that we need supernatural assistance in order to accomplish it (Rom. 7:15–25). This is why we need to yield to God and claim our victory in Christ. The victory is assured! We don’t need to keep doubting. **Instead, we must keep on praying (Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:18), keep on believing (Eph. 6:16; Heb. 10:22), keep on yielding or surrendering ourselves to God (Rom. 6:13; Rom. 12:1-2), and keep on claiming our eternal security and spiritual riches in Christ (Eph. 1:3).** In doing so, you can possess victory over doubting, divided opinions, and distrust in God’s promises regarding your salvation and eternal life.

Keep On Believing



You must face something. If you believe in eternal security and that salvation is by faith alone through grace alone (without works) but still have doubts, you are one of those rare birds who are wired differently than others. There are others like you flying around! Of course, this does not mean you cannot come to peace with God and His promise of eternal life. Some Christians do have doubts, but they come to a place where they can surrender their doubts to God and not be overcome and plagued by them. They can bury them through their union with Christ and not allow these doubts to blow them off course. Yes, you can like other Christians possess 100 percent assurance as well. You just need to keep surrendering your doubts to God as they come and keep on believing!

I know I sound like a broken record, but this is important to emphasize. We have mentioned this already but let's reconfirm the importance of keep on believing. 1 John 5:13 again reminds us to keep on believing: **"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God (our initial belief in Christ for salvation); that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God"** (our continuing belief in Christ for salvation as we live our Christian lives).

In other words, when we believe on Christ to be our Savior ("unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God"), we can know that we have eternal life. But assurance can only be maintained when we keep believing on God's Son ("and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God"). We don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure this out. To possess assurance, we must keep on believing. The way we started our Christian life is the way we live our Christian life – by faith. **So we keep on believing which means we don't keep on doubting!**

Ephesians 6:16:

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

This must be very important for Paul says, **"Above all else" – keep the faith!** In other words, maintain your belief in God's promises including the promise of eternal life.

Hebrews 10:22

"Let us draw near (near to God) with a true (sincere) heart in full assurance of faith (maintaining the belief that Christ alone saves us forever and therefore God accepts us as His children in the very throne room of His presence within Heaven), having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (an Old Testament illustration of possessing a clean conscience and conscious enjoyment that we are eternally forgiven through Christ's saving sacrifice).

"Conscience now no more condemns us,
For His own most precious blood
Once for all has washed and cleansed us,
Cleansed us in the eyes of God."

The word “**believe**” (John 3:16, 18; 3:36; 5:25; 6:47) often connotes a present tense in the Greek language and suggests that we need to maintain the same belief we expressed in Christ at the beginning of our Christian experience (Acts 16:31) to possess assurance. *What I believed about Christ and His saving sacrifice when I was saved is what I must continue to believe about Him to possess assurance.* We are to live the Christian life the way we began the Christian life. We trust only in Christ for our salvation and eternal life.

Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:12, “for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” Paul committed his faith, soul, and entire destiny to Jesus Christ and knew that God would maintain his salvation (“he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him”). Paul could come to this conclusion because He kept on believing in the promise that Christ saves him eternally. The knowing (assurance) is based upon Christ (“whom I have believed”) for this is where assurance lies. I can know or possess assurance for it’s Christ who saves me and maintains (keeps) my salvation.

Doubting, Spiritual Warfare, and Victory



Remember that many things converge or come together (the physical, emotional, and spiritual) in your personal life that can result in doubting your salvation.

There might be some physical and emotional things going on that factor into your doubting but there are always spiritual things happening in relation to our personalities and other physical limitations. Satan and his

followers work us over trying to *exploit our weak areas* and we must learn how to effectively do battle with them to gain the victory over doubt (Eph. 6:12-18).

Some Christians might have several issues occurring at the same time. *Do you experience things like emotional instability, irritability, anxiety, self-doubt, depression, and other negative feelings?* All of us can experience some of these things at certain times but if you are consistently on the downside then this could play into your doubting. If you live the “doubting Thomas” lifestyle you may more easily fall victim to doubting your salvation.

But doubting is much more than something physical or emotional – it pertains to the spiritual forces of Satan who take what I call our “Achilles heel” (our vulnerable areas) and exploit them. So knowing this and then learning how to battle through the doubts and gain victory over them can help you immensely. Reading books that deal with Bible assurance is important, but we must learn how to battle with these doubts and win the victory over them while applying the truth of God’s armor (Eph. 6:10-18) to our hearts and lives.



If you lack assurance, you don’t need to keep praying FOR victory over doubts but CLAIM the victory you already possess in Christ by applying the “word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15) to your unbelief and getting the victory over it. This is a matter of “spiritual warfare.” Specifically, we can pray on the armor of God in our minds and hearts and claim our victory in Christ over our lack of confidence in Christ and our salvation. In other words, we can pray and receive the victory over doubting by getting assurance. **When we pray in faith we have no doubts, but when we flounder in our feelings and own fickleness, we do without (without victory and assurance).**

Spiritual warfare is sometimes necessary to gain victory over doubts related to one’s salvation. This is because Satan and his followers tempt us in this area. Ephesians 6:12 says, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.” These are spirit beings (demons) roaming around seeking to tempt us and destroy our faith in Christ alone for our salvation. They try and get us to doubt our salvation. The good news is that Jesus Christ through His death and stripped the Devil and demons of their power over us.

Colossians 2:15 is speaking of the cross and it concludes: “*And having spoiled (disarmed, to strip of one’s power) principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*”

Christ’s triumph and victory over the Devil and demons becomes ours for we share an identity (union) with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. We share in Christ’s victory! Yes, we are victors in Christ which means we do not

have to be overcome with Satan's doubting game which he tries to push on us. We must learn the secret of praying through God's armor and claiming the victory already provided for us.

SINCERITY: Ephesians 6:14 commands us to "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth..." The belt held all the other armor together. The belt of truth seems to relate to our own personal sincerity and integrity in believing God's truth which in this case is possessing a genuine desire to be victorious over doubting our salvation, God's free gift of eternal life. *Sincerity in believing*



and practicing the truth seems to be the general idea being taught with the analogy of the belt of truth. Again, if we doubt, we do without! Without assurance! As we come to God's Word, we must be truthful or sincere in wanting to possess victory. If necessary, we must humble ourselves and come in genuine repentance (James 4:7-10), facing our lack of belief, and sincerely seek God's victory over our doubts. Psalm 51:6 states: "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts..." We must be sincere about doing what is right and following God's truth and way for our lives.

Philippians 1:10 speaks of truthfulness or sincerity:

"That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."

Thomas Watson once said:

"Temptation is a trial of our sincerity."

General Douglas MacArthur once said:

"It is fatal to enter any war without the will to win it."

Dr. Warren Wiersbe commented on truthfulness in this way:

"A man of integrity, with a clear conscience, can face the enemy without fear. The girdle also held the sword. Unless we practice the truth, we cannot use the Word of truth. Once a lie gets into the life of a believer, everything begins to fall apart. For over a year, King David lied about his sin with Bathsheba, and nothing went right."

In short, we must be determined in our hearts to do what is right and believe what is right if we want victory. Jesus taught in John 13:17: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

In the time of temptation (“the evil day”), and even before temptation comes (Matt. 6:13), we must make a clear commitment (mentally and prayerfully) to put on the belt of truth, which means we must sincerely want victory over doubts and the lack of assurance regarding our salvation. Without a sincere commitment to believing and following the truth we cannot maintain our victory over these doubts.

2 Corinthians 11:3 states: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

The word “simplicity” speaks of possessing a genuine and sincere devotion to follow Christ and His Word. Without possessing a genuine desire to be devoted to Christ and His truth, we will fall prey to Satan’s temptations and be overcome with doubts regarding our salvation.

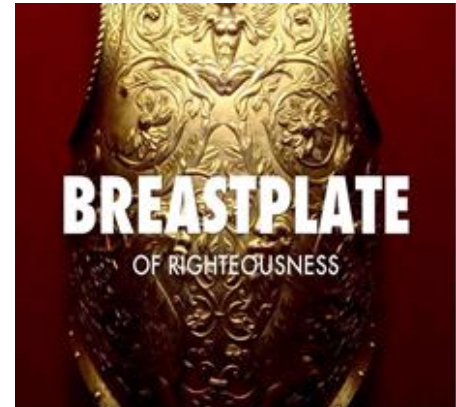
PRAYER OF SINCERITY: Dear Heavenly Father, I want to mentally place upon my life the belt of truth. During this temptation I am actively engaging in this spiritual battle, reaffirming my sincerity and sole desire to believe the truth about the promise of eternal life that You gave to me. I will not believe the Devil’s doubts. I am confidently and sincerely placing my faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. Jesus said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Jesus paid it all for me so I will never pay of the penalty of judgment for my sins.

With my whole heart I continue to claim the truth of my eternal security in Christ. I refuse to follow the sin of unbelief but continually commit my faith to Jesus Christ and His promise of “everlasting life” which He repeatedly gave to me (John 3:16; John 6:47). I refuse to give in to the temptation to doubt, but instead, with an open heart I claim God’s promise of eternal life and my victory through my identity in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. I AM DEAD TO DOUBTING!

As Romans six teaches, I am no longer the person I used to be. I am dead to these sinful doubts and refuse to accept them and allow them to rule my mind and life. I have been put to death with Christ. The sin of doubting has been defeated in my death with Christ. I am buried with Christ reassuring me that I truly have died with Christ and to sin’s slavery and power over my life. I place my doubts in the grave with Christ and I now believe that I am alive

in Christ sharing His resurrection life and power to grant me victory during this moment of temptation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SPIRITUALITY: “and having on the breastplate of righteousness” (Eph. 6:14b). This piece of armor covered the torso area and protected the vital organs of the Roman soldier. As we live a righteous life, or an active spiritual life, this will keep us from being overcome by the attacks of the enemy. We know that we have a positional standing of righteousness before God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1; 8:30, 33-34) but Paul will deal with this positional righteousness in the next piece of the armor when he talks about the Gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15). I'm convinced that here Paul seems to be stressing practical righteousness in our everyday living or “he that doeth righteousness” (1 Jn. 3:7).



Even though we have positional righteousness before God's throne in Christ, without practical righteousness in our daily life Satan (our adversary) will find opportunities to attack us. Here, it seems likely that Paul is referring to a practical and daily righteous lifestyle (spiritual living) or uprightness of life. We need to be dedicated to living a spiritual life that manifests itself in righteous deeds and actions. In order to maintain and possess our victory in Christ, we should be practicing daily righteousness.

1 Timothy 6:11 says:

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness...”

Proverbs 11:30

“The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life; and he that winneth souls *is* wise.” Of course, living a righteous life is an important step to maintaining our victory in relation to assurance of salvation. If we are not centering our life on doing what is right, we become vulnerable to temptation and defeat in many areas including doubting our salvation. To know that something is right but then refuse to do it leaves a gaping hole in our armor.

Satan gets “**advantage**” (greater part) of us (2 Cor. 2:11), a starting point to work, a beachhead, when we are already harboring sin in our hearts and lives such as an unforgiving spirit toward someone. This in return allows

Satan to get a greater portion of our lives and brings more sin, confusion, and defeat into our Christian experience. Ephesians 4:27 says, “**Neither give place** (*a greater portion and opportunity*) **to the devil.**” This concept of giving place to the Devil involves giving up territory in our hearts and lives to Satan’s rule instead of God’s rule. When we are not living a righteous life in some specific areas of our life, we are opening the door for Satan to begin his work. He takes over certain areas of our life and this makes us more vulnerable to temptation and surrendering more ground to Satan. **If you give Satan an inch, he will eventually take a yard!** One weak area can lead to other weak areas which can include doubting our salvation.

When we are weak in one area, we can become weakened in another area. This is why we need to live our lives on a higher spiritual plain. Staying right (maintaining spirituality) will keep us from falling into the traps of the Devil. For instance, if we are harboring unforgiveness in our hearts toward others, or if we are questioning or doubting God’s character and ways in relation to the events of our life, then we are not living a righteous life. We are living on lower ground – not higher ground. We are not living on the victory side of life. This makes us vulnerable to Satan’s temptations even in the specific area of doubting our salvation.

As a soldier’s breastplate protected his chest from an enemy’s attacks, so living a righteous and holy life guards our own heart against the assaults of the Devil which would include doubting our salvation and lacking assurance in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross (John 19:30).

Someone said:

“When a man is clothed in practical righteousness, he is impregnable. Words are no defense against accusation, but a good life is. If our conscience is void of offense toward God and man, the devil has nothing to shoot at.”

Staying spiritual or living a Spirit-filled or Spirit-controlled life keeps us from failing and straying during demonic temptation. Ephesians 5:18 commands: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess (*don’t be controlled by wine*); but be filled (*controlled*) with the Spirit.” In other words, we need to keep a spiritual edge! Spirituality is an important part of God’s armor that will help us to live victoriously. If we maintain spirituality or righteous living, we won’t become accessible to Satan’s schemes and sidetracked into sinful living.

Philippians 1:11 reminds us of this:

“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”

Maintaining a spiritual life through righteous living is vitally important to remain victorious in our Christian life. Stay on the straight and narrow way and you will not be easily overcome by Satan’s foolish tactics. So, “having on the breastplate of righteousness” means to keep your spiritual life tuned up and functioning. This means we are to “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25) and live on higher ground.

“I’m pressing on the upward way,
New heights I’m gaining every day;
Still praying as I onward bound,
“Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”

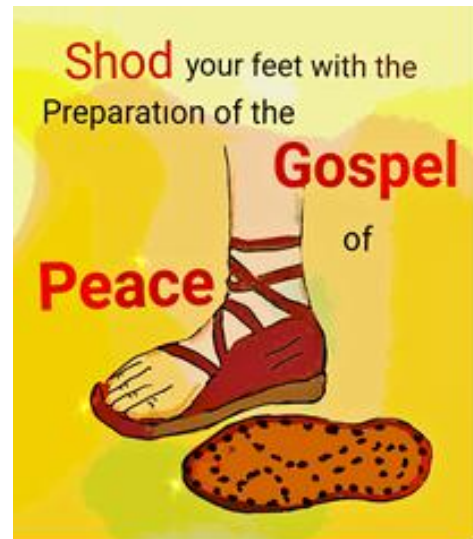
In the time of temptation (“the evil day”), and even before temptation comes (Matt. 6:13), we must make a clear commitment (mentally and prayerfully) to put on the breastplate of righteousness, which means we must remain determined and possess a dogged persistence to live a righteous and spiritual life. Without this commitment we cannot maintain our victory.

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING: Dear Lord, I am mentally placing upon my heart and life the breastplate of righteousness. I choose this day to live a righteous life that honors and glorifies You. I want the spiritual protection that a righteous and holy life provides for me. I know that if I am seeking to live for You that I will be less vulnerable to Satan’s temptations. I am committed to remaining “stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

I realize that if I am living in defeat in other areas of my life that I will be more susceptible to Satan’s attempts to get me to doubt my salvation. Lord, I don’t want to be disobedient. I want to follow Your will in every area of my life. Open my mind to those areas that need improvement so that I might do what is right in Your sight. I will live for You this day and consecrate my life to you as a vessel fit for the Master’s use. I will reclaim my identity in Christ. I AM NOT A DOUBTER BUT A VICTOR AND BELIEVER! “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer” (Ps. 19:14). In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

SERENITY: Ephesians 6:15 goes on to say, “And your feet shod (*bound*) with the preparation (*readiness*) of the gospel of peace” (*be prepared to use this truth in the time of temptation*).

This truth speaks of our positional standing of peace and acceptance that we have before God’s throne through the work of Jesus Christ, which means our peaceful standing before God is based upon Christ’s death, resurrection, and imputed forgiveness and righteousness we have received through His saving work. The Gospel of Peace is especially important to understand if we are going to stop doubting and possess the assurance of our salvation. For this reason, we need to spend more time on this piece of armor.



Romans 5:1 declares: “**Therefore being justified by faith** (*declared legally righteous before God’s throne through faith in Christ*), **we have peace with God** (*a peaceful standing before God – no more wrath, condemnation, judgment - only forgiveness, acceptance, and unconditional love from God!*) **through our Lord Jesus Christ** (*His death, resurrection, and imputed perfect righteousness which is credited to our legal record in Heaven*). **By whom also we have access by faith** (*access into God’s presence – the very throne room of Heaven as a result of expressing faith in Christ at the time of salvation*) **into this grace wherein we stand** (*our positional standing of acceptance before God the Father in Christ’s perfect righteousness*), **and rejoice in hope of the glory of God**” (*we joyfully look forward to when we will gaze upon His glory and in some small way share His glory in a redemptive body*).

This means that I now possess a peaceful relationship with God for “the chastisement of our peace was upon him” (Isa. 53:5). God is no longer angry with me, and I am no longer God’s enemy. God accepts me, assures me that I am His forever, and that nothing can separate us from His love in Christ (Rom. 8:33-39). All of this is ours because of the Gospel! It is the “gospel of peace” because through the Gospel (Christ’s death and resurrection) I have been credited with forgiveness and perfect righteousness before God’s throne, which results in a peaceful relationship of ACCEPTANCE and ACCESS in the presence of God forever (Heb. 4:16). The Gospel of peace

means that God is no longer angry with us, He no longer sees us as His enemy (Rom. 5:10), but instead He views us as His children whom He loves unconditionally and forever in Christ.

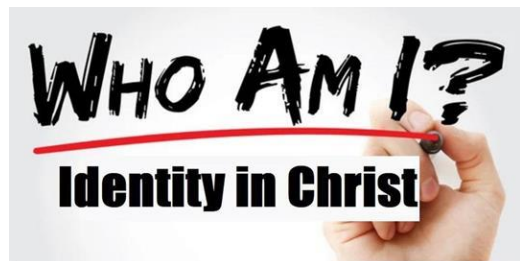


It also means that when I sin in my Christian life the blood of Jesus Christ continually cleanses me from all sin (1 John 1:7) and restores my walk and fellowship with God. I can always restart, renew, and restore my walk and communion with God. This is because the blood of Christ maintains my standing (position) of forgiveness and righteousness before God's throne (through my identity in Christ). We have been given "**peace through the blood of his cross**" (Col. 1:20). God's

wrath is satisfied against me, I have a peaceful standing of acceptance before God forever.

On the basis of my identity in Christ (God granting me legal forgiveness and righteousness before His throne in Christ), I can ask for cleansing and forgiveness in my Christian life and the Father will always forgive me (1 John 1:9). Don't let Satan tell you that God won't forgive you anymore, that you have sinned away the day of grace, and there is no more hope for you. These are lies. God always forgives us because of our identity in Christ. He always and forever views us legally forgiven, justified, and at peace with Him

Let me repeat something important. The problem with many Christians today is that they have an identity crisis. Instead of identifying with Christ and their positional acceptance and peace before God's throne, they would rather identify with their feelings, personalities, and their weaknesses, and flawed perceptions of themselves. **Our identity in Christ means WHO WE ARE in Christ, how the Father sees or views us through the saving merits of Jesus Christ.** We have already discovered that in the area of SANCTIFICATION we are dead, buried, and alive in Christ. We are dead to the sin of doubting – we are no longer a doubter for the old doubter died with Christ. We are also risen with Christ, sharing His life and power to live victoriously over doubting.



But there is more to our identity in Christ that relates to the area of our SALVATION. The Bible teaches that we are forgiven and justified (declared righteous in God's presence) and therefore have peace before God. This means God's wrath is appeased. God is no longer angry with us. It means God the Father fully, finally, and forever accepts us in Christ through whom we receive eternal forgiveness and righteousness before His throne.

The Bible teaches that before God we possess legal forgiveness and imputed (reckoned, credited) righteousness (Rom. 4:5-8; 11, 22-24 Gal. 3:6) through the death of Christ on our behalf, which God gives to us out of His grace. This means that God places His Son's righteousness on our legal account or record in Heaven. God goes to the record book where all our sins have been recorded and erases all our past sins and equally provides acquittal for all our future sins. He then makes certain that nothing else (no other sin) is written on that page in the future by filling it with the perfect righteousness of His own Son!

This means that when you turn to the page in the legal records and entry book in Heaven where your name is written, you will find only two words written down. They are the words "**forgiven**" and "**righteous!**" Once the entry of righteousness is placed on your spiritual record in Heaven, then the matter is settled once for all! We are acquitted of all our sins forever, declared legally righteous in the presence of God forever, and are given a peaceful standing of acceptance before God forever. No more condemnation, no more anger, no more separation, no more fear of God's judgment. It's all passed forever! Jesus has become our righteousness and peace before God!

2 Corinthians 5:21 reminds us of the great transaction of salvation: "**For he (the Father) hath made him to be sin for us (the substitution of Christ on behalf of the sinner, bearing their sin debt, the wages of sin which are death – Rom. 6:23), who knew no sin (the perfect sacrifice of Christ – Heb. 9:14); that we might be made the righteousness of God in him**" (as a result of our position in Christ the Father sees us through the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to our legal record in Heaven).

Because of our acquittal and righteous standing through the Gospel (Christ's death and resurrection) we possess this peaceful standing before God. It's this message, the Gospel of peace, that grants us victory in the time when we doubt our salvation.

The word “preparation” (readiness) in Ephesians 6:15 (“preparation of the gospel of peace”) is likely understood as the believer being prepared or ready to stand against Satan’s temptations and this temptation can deal with doubting our salvation and security in Christ. This is a theological battle that has practical implications regarding our victory.



We have a positional peace and acceptance before God which is expressed in God’s unbroken love for His saints (Romans 8:38-39). We must use this truth when entering spiritual warfare with Satan. God accepts and loves His saints unconditionally because of the imputed, legal, or credited righteousness we have in Christ. Yes, God always loves and accepts His children unconditionally through the saving provision of the Gospel of peace!

But how does this Gospel of peace apply to us when we are struggling with the temptation to doubt our salvation?

1 First, the Gospel of peace protects us from the Devil’s harassment of our past. We can claim our positional standing of acceptance before God when the Devil (our accuser) heckles, hounds, and harasses us (Luke 22:31) by reminding us of our sinful failures and fallacies of the past. We have plenty of them! But knowing the truth of our positional standing of peace before God through the Gospel, helps us to be prepared and ready to do battle with Satan’s attempts to drown and defeat us in our past failures. We can throw the “gospel of peace” in the face of Satan and declare: “God has forgiven me of all my sins, and He makes sure that none will be added to my legal record in Heaven again by declaring every Gospel believer legally righteous in the perfect righteousness of His own Son!”

My past haunts me...
constantly.

The promise of our righteous and peaceful standing before God is important because it protects us from feelings of guilt and condemnation before God. Satan will try and defeat our lives by bringing personal accusations against us of our past. However, when we flee to God’s throne, we know that the Gospel of peace means that the Heavenly Father always accepts us in the finished work of Christ (Rom. 5:1-2). Don’t

let the enemy convince you to pick up the invoice for your past sinful mistakes. You owe nothing. Jesus already paid the bill through His sacrifice on the cross (1 Cor. 15:3) and God is no longer with you over your sins. You have peace before God's throne.

Luther said that when the devil came knocking on the door of his heart, he would send the Lord Jesus to the door. Christ would say: "Martin Luther used to live here but has moved out ... I now live here." Then, said Luther, "when the devil would see the nail prints on the hands of Christ and his pierced side, he would take flight immediately."

The Gospel of peace reassures us that because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His sacrificial death we are given the provision of Christ's forgiveness and perfect righteousness before God's throne. This means God always accepts us and will never abandon us.

2

Second, the Gospel of peace provides us with the assurance of our salvation. The doctrine of eternal security is directly related to the "gospel of peace." The Devil tries to get us to doubt our salvation.

Haunting us about our past and present sins can result in the believer doubting God's positional forgiveness that He has granted each believer before His throne. The Gospel of peace, "having made peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20), reassures us of our eternal security in Christ before the throne of God. Salvation's security is based upon our peaceful standing of acceptance in the heavenlies (Eph. 1:3) and reassures us that we are safe and secure because our life is "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). In other words, the Father sees us through Jesus Christ and His saving sacrifice which provides us with imputed legal forgiveness and righteousness in God's presence. Therefore, we have no reason to doubt our salvation.



The doctrine of eternal security is certainly important to the believer's life and victory. Satan will often try and tempt God's people in this specific area. He will send beguiling messages to our minds: "You cannot be sure that God accepts you. You can never know for certain that you are saved. In fact, you

might be going to hell after all.” Satan is a master artist when it comes to tempting us about our salvation before God’s throne. The answer to this specific temptation (doubting your security in Christ) is the “gospel of peace” which declares our complete acquittal and righteous standing before the presence of God based upon the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 5:9).

It’s within the throne room of Heaven where God accepts the sacrifice and perfect righteousness of God’s son as sufficient to save our souls forever. We are clothed in the robe of Christ’s righteousness and reckoned righteous in God’s sight. The Bible says in Hebrews 7:25: “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost (completely and totally) that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Our salvation is of the Lord and is completely in the hands of our Savior! It’s ours eternally through the Gospel of peace! Don’t allow Satan, the old Serpent, to slither into your life and bring doubt regarding your peaceful standing before God through Christ’s credited righteousness.

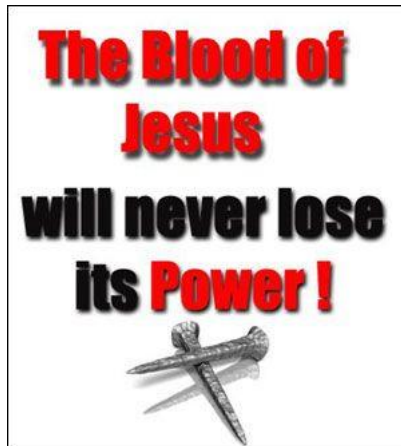


Being prepared to battle Satan with the “gospel of peace” keeps us secure in relation to our salvation when we understand that our salvation is based on the perfect acquittal and righteousness we have through God’s

dear Son. **We experience emotional and doctrinal defeat when we doubt the sufficiency of Christ’s forgiveness (past, present, future sins) and imputed righteousness that He gives to us before God’s throne.** When we question the salvation provided for us by Christ, the Devil gets us to lose the hope we can have in the Gospel of peace.

3

Third, the Gospel of peace reminds us that God will always forgive us and restore our fellowship with Him based upon our acceptance before God’s throne, through the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, which maintains our salvation before God (1 John 1:7-9). The Devil will try and get us to believe God will not forgive us. Satan places another message in our mind after we have sinned and desire to restore our fellowship with God. He often says, “You have sinned away God’s forgiveness and the day of His grace. The blood of Jesus will not forgive your sin. God won’t take you back into fellowship with Himself. You might as well face it – God is finished with you.”



Again, these are lies which Satan uses to keep us bound to our doubts, to keep us from confessing our sins and remaining in fellowship with God. Don't believe the lies. Instead, believe God's promise of forgiveness (1 John 1:9) and restore your fellowship and walk with God. We already possess legal forgiveness before God's throne and God is at peace with us (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 6:15). His wrath is satisfied against us because Jesus took our wrath in God's place. Based on our legal forgiveness and eternal security *we already*

possess in Christ through the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Rom. 5:9), we can be repeatedly cleansed or forgiven of our sins that we commit in our Christian life because of His sacrificial blood (1 John 1:7) and have our fellowship restored with God (James 4:8). This is because the blood of Jesus Christ maintains our position of acceptance before God. To state it succinctly, the blood will never lose its power!

Let's set the record straight. In the midst of all the mindboggling and beguiling messages of Satan, we can know and claim that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7), maintaining our state of forgiveness and justification (legal righteousness) before God. This means we have a



continual state of peace and loving acceptance before God and this message enables us to possess victory during the time of temptation and battle with Satan ("the evil day" – Eph. 6:13). **When Satan tempts us to doubt our salvation, sending us doubting, beguiling, and mind-boggling thoughts, we can overcome these bombarding temptations "by the blood of the Lamb"** (Rev. 12:11), claiming our legal and eternal forgiveness before God's throne.

If we claim this truth of our Gospel peace before God, Satan's accusations and harassments against us will have no weight and he cannot steal away our victory. Our *grip on the Gospel* will enable us to hold our ground and "stand against the wile of the devil" (Eph. 6:11) "and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13). We are forgiven! We are reckoned righteous before God! We

have peace before God's throne. God is not angry with us, His wrath is satisfied (propitiated) against us (1 John 2:1-2), and He will never judge us as His beloved children (John 5:24). We will never be condemned (John 3:18). We are safe and secure! We shall never perish for we cannot be plucked from the gracious and powerful hand of God (John 10:28).

“Safe am I, Safe am I,
In the hollow of His hand.
Sheltered o'er, sheltered o'er
With His love forever more.
No ill can harm me;
No foe alarm me
For He keeps both day and night.
Safe am I, Safe am I,
In the hollow of His hand.”

Many times we suffer *mental defeat* or remain in the *emotional defeat* mode because we have listened to the Devil's lies! We were not “prepared” with the Gospel of peace to counter these lies. Allow me to play the Devil's advocate one more time. The Devil comes to us and says that “God doesn't love you anymore. God won't accept you anymore. You have blown it too many times. You are a loser and God knows it. God is finished with you. You might as well face it; you are going to hell.”

Here is the good news! Because of the Gospel of peace (God is at peace with us through Christ), He always unconditionally loves, accepts, and keeps His children safe. Therefore, God continually desires their restored fellowship (1 John 1:9; Rev. 3:20). God is for us – not against us! God desires our fellowship – He does not detest it! This is because the blood of Jesus Christ avails for us in Heaven (continually cleansing us from all sin) and therefore maintains our salvation before the throne (1 John 1:7). Christ's blood writes me down as forgiven and righteous and at peace with God. And it's on this basis that we can have our fellowship restored with God.

“May He write me down as righteous
Where no righteousness has been.
Shielding me from wrath and judgment
As it covers all my sin.
There's no work that I've accomplished
Nor my goodness would I plead,
Just let the blood of Calvary speak for me.”



Let me reiterate this. The Bible states, “**And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb**” (Rev. 12:11). The blood of Jesus Christ is the ground or basis for our victory. *We overcome Satan’s temptations by claiming our victory through the blood*

of Jesus Christ. The shedding of His blood on the cross has utterly defeated Satan’s power and accusations over our lives (Col. 2:15) and reminds us of our peaceful standing and complete acceptance before God. Colossians 1:20 declares: “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself...” Think of it. We possess a peaceful standing before God’s throne. We are reconciled to God. God is no longer angry with us. He forever accepts us through Jesus Christ and His spiritual provisions of forgiveness and righteousness.

If we hide the message of Gospel peace in our hearts, we are going to be victorious over the Devil and his demonic cohorts who tempt us to doubt our salvation. We need to be prepared with the message of Gospel peace (our peaceful standing of acquittal, justification, and acceptance before God) through the blood of Jesus Christ for this message will not only maintain our victory, but also bring us out of the gloom and doom of defeat and into the heights of newfound victory over doubting our salvation.

In the time of temptation (“the evil day”), and even before temptation comes (Matt. 6:13), we must make a clear commitment (mentally and prayerfully) to prepare ourselves for battle with the “gospel of peace” which means we must claim our peaceful standing before God’s throne based upon the sufficient death of Christ and His righteousness which is reckoned to our legal record in Heaven.

PRAYER OF PEACE: Dear Heavenly Father, I believe in the good news of the Gospel of peace and right now I am mentally preparing to do battle with this piece of the armor. I accept the truth that You are at peace with me for I believe that I am eternally accepted before Your throne through the forgiveness and righteousness Christ has given to me. Therefore, I refuse to doubt my salvation for it is forever secure in the legal forgiveness and righteous standing I have in Christ before Your throne.

Thank you for always looking at me through Christ, accepting me, loving me unconditionally as Your child, so that I can always in confidence say; “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). You have “made peace through the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20) for me. You are no longer angry with me. You accept me eternally as Your child. Upon the merits of Christ’s shed blood, I accept my identity in Christ. I am forgiven, I am justified (made righteous in Your presence) and I know that my position before You can never change for it is rooted in Christ. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

SHIELD: “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Eph. 6:16). Remember that it’s not fluctuating feelings but faith; it’s not our fickle personalities but faith in the stated propositions or facts of God’s Word that brings assurance into our hearts.

“Above all, taking the shield of faith.” The shield was a very important part of the armor. It protected the soldier against fiery arrows which were designed to kill and defeat the soldier. The enemy would frequently shoot arrows with flaming tips at the soldiers in the opposing army. But hiding behind the shield, the soldier had nothing to fear from these burning missiles. The shield protects the heart and this signifies protecting our hearts from Satan’s attacks against us.



1 John 5:4 declares that “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” The world is a system made up of a set of ideas, people, activities, purposes, lies, fleshly lusts, pride, and many other things that oppose God and takes us away from the truth. The world appears as a monstrous scheme of devilish temptation, always trying to drag us away from God, His promises of eternal salvation, and from what is eternal, seeking to occupy us with what is temporary and sensual. If we are not careful, we can become victims of the passing things of the world (1 John 2:17). This is why we need the shield of faith.

Every Christian has overcome the world by his or her initial faith in Jesus Christ (1Jn. 3:9). The faith that saves us from hell is the same faith that

maintains our sanctification and victory over Satan's temptations. By means of faith in Christ, we are a world-conqueror. This suggests that faith is the secret of continuing victory



Paul pictures the believer in the heat of battle. The air is thick with flaming arrows that had been dipped in pitch and set on fire. It's a life and death situation. How will he survive? By faith! The analogy of the shield of faith provides believers with the protection we need against the "fiery darts of the

wicked" (wicked is describing Satan and his temptations). His temptations are described as "fiery darts" that he shoots at us, such as thoughts of doubts, fears, worries, lust, greed, anger, pride, gossip. The flaming arrows include all forms of temptation such as discouragement, despair, or doubting God's promise of eternal life.

Satan's temptations are viewed or personified as flaming arrows which are trying to ignite passions and wrong conclusions inside of our minds and hearts. If the Devil can get you to dwell upon a certain suggestion long enough (doubting our salvation) his fiery arrow will eventually burn into our mind so that we end up disbelieving in His promise of eternal life.

We cannot keep these thoughts from entering our mind or racing through our thought process. This is part of the temptation process (Matt. 4:1-11). **Thinking certain thoughts is not a sin. It's how we respond to these thoughts and what we do with them that will take us down or grant us victory.** The arrows will hit our minds but the imagery of putting the shield up reminds us that we do not have to allow these temptations to burn and destroy our spiritual thinking and steal away our victory. In other words, we don't have to act upon these thoughts or embrace and believe them. Instead, we can overcome them, so they don't overcome us. Believing God's promises of eternal life act as a protective shield that keeps us from mental and emotional defeat in the area of doubting our salvation.

Satan comes along and places the thoughts in your mind: "Maybe you are not saved after all;" "Your faith in Christ was not real;" Christ did not really

pay the judgment for all your sins;” “God has given up on you;” “God no longer loves you;” “You are no longer His child.” Faith shields our lives from Satan’s fiery temptations even those which try and get us to doubt our salvation. How do you deal with the fiery arrows? You take up the shield of faith!

The spiritual application from the Roman soldier to the Christian soldier is easy to see. The Devil can do nothing against us when we possess faith in God’s promise of eternal life (John 3:16). His worst attacks are frustrated by our faith. Faith involves a *renunciation* of our own self effort, human power, and doubts. Faith means we are always *relying* upon the Lord for victory as it relates to doubting our salvation. Faith means we are continually *reapplying* God’s truth of eternal life to our hearts and minds during the time of battle. Our faith acts as a shield to ward off Satan’s temptations and puts out the fire of unbelief that is trying to be ignited in our souls.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says:

“Faith here means the ability to apply quickly what we believe so as to repel everything the devil does or attempts to do to us.”

Paul says that we must “take up” this shield. It’s not automatic. Rather, you must actively trust in God’s promise of eternal life when the enemy’s arrows fly. We must believe that the *promises* of His Word are always true (Ps. 119:160; 2 Tim. 2:15).

“Faith is the victory, Faith is the victory,
Oh glorious victory,
That overcomes the world.”

The important thing is to quench the fiery dart immediately by acting in faith. Instantly look to Christ by faith, recall the promises of the Word on eternal security such as “I give unto them eternal life” (John 10:28); “kept by the power of God” (1 Pet. 1:5), “he that believeth on my hath everlasting life” (John 6:47); and believe these promises. If you don’t by faith claim the promises the fire will start to spread, and if you add fuel to the fire, it will burn beyond your control. Your feelings will get aroused and upset, and before long Satan will be in control and have you doubting your salvation. So, faith is the victory – the shield of faith.

1 John 5:4 once again triumphantly declares:
“For whatsoever is born of God (*referencing our born-again human spirit*)
overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even
our faith.”

How we begin the Christian life is how we live the Christian life – by faith! Faith is still the victory and it will always be the way of victory. A Christian psychologist on the radio once declared that to tell hurting people to “trust God” is useless advice. Actually, this was terrible advice! If he was right, I wonder how the many generations of saints through the centuries before the advent of modern psychotherapy managed to deal with life’s overwhelming problems? I don’t find psychology in the listing of God’s armor!

The Bible teaches that to trust is to triumph! Faith believes that God can provide the Christian with victory over any sin, and this includes the sin of doubting our salvation. Faith says, “No matter what happens God will give me victory over my doubts.” We must have faith and believe that “nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37). He can and does keep His word on eternal security. **Again, when we pray in doubt we do without – without assurance (James 1:6-7).**

David declared in Psalm 31:13-15: “For I have heard the slander of many: fear *was* on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *art* my God. My times *are* in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.”

We need this same kind of trust or faith today, that God will deliver us from our doubts and give us continued assurance of salvation. *It’s important to remember that Satan wants to weaken our faith in the truth of God’s Word during the struggles and hardships of life.* When Satan tempted Eve, he began by weakening her faith in God. He questioned God’s Word (“Yea, hath God said?” – Gen. 3:1) and God’s goodness by concluding that God would not allow her to eat of “every tree of the garden” (Gen. 3:1). **We must never forget that Satan’s number one goal is to weaken our faith in God, the truth of God’s Word, and that we are victors in Christ.**

When our faith is weakened, we are vulnerable to Satan’s fiery darts. The shield of faith is an absolute necessity in the time of battle to keep the fiery darts from burning into our minds and defeating us. We must keep the shield

before us or we will be wounded by Satan's fiery suggestions and end up doubting our eternal salvation in Christ.

Hebrews 11:33-34 speaks about believers who possessed great faith in the time of the devil's persecution and suffering. "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

Pastor Steven Cole comments:

"The Bible is full of stories of believers who were in overwhelming circumstances, where they despaired of life itself. What did they do? They couldn't get an appointment with their psychotherapist. He didn't do battlefield calls. So they cried out to God and trusted in Him. In many cases, He delivered them from death. In other cases, He sustained them as they died in faith. You can read a summary of these stories in Hebrews 11, which makes the point that whether they were delivered or whether they died, they believed God and His sure Word. Faith in God is the essential shield that quenches the arrows of the evil one."

Now reflect on this. One of the greatest temptations that we face in our Christian lives is to stop being dependent upon God and instead rely on our own intellect and resources. As long as we think we know more about our salvation than God, we will be defeated and miserable. The spiritual erosion occurs when our confidence of faith is shifted to our own resources and abilities instead of directing our faith toward God – His power to save us forever (1 Pet. 1:3) and His promises of eternal life.

Someone created an acrostic of what true victorious faith stands for and what faith must claim during the Christian battle.

D.L. Moody said that for many years he struggled to have faith, but it alluded him. Then he read, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). He stopped praying for faith

- F** – Forgiveness of sin
- A** – Assurance of salvation
- I** – Identification with Christ
- T** – Triumph over Satan
- H** – Hope of deliverance

and spent more time in the Scriptures. The more time he spent in the Word of God, the greater his faith became and the same will be true for us. The more faith that we place in the promises and truth of Scripture, the greater our victory will be, as we ward off the fiery darts of the Devil. The truths of Scripture *feed our faith* and enable us to overcome Satan. But we must possess faith in what God says.

Pastor David Moss remarked:

“The essential element of faith, however, is believing that God is right about everything.”

- ✓ Faith is believing what God has said,
- ✓ Faith is taking God at His word,
- ✓ Faith is accepting His teaching,
- ✓ Faith is obeying His commands,
- ✓ Faith is heeding His thoughts,
- ✓ Faith is laying hold of His many promises.

1 Peter 5:8-9

“Be sober, be vigilant (*stay on guard*); because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, (*his fierce and determined activity against God’s children*) walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (*destroy and defeat us spiritually*): Whom resist (*defend yourself*) **stedfast in the faith (*what we believe - the truth of God’s Word, the truth about eternal life and security*) **knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world**” (*knowing that we can possess victory in times of persecution and suffering*).**

The story is told of the Scottish pioneer missionary John G Paton (1824–1907) who was translating the Bible for a South Seas Island tribe. In the course of his exhaustive work, he discovered that they had no word for trust or faith. One day a native who had been running hard came into the missionary’s house, flopped himself in a large chair and said in his own dialect: ‘Phew! It’s good to rest my whole weight on this chair!’ ‘That’s it,’ said the alert John Paton, ‘I’ll translate faith as “someone resting their whole weight on God.”

When we rest our whole weight on God and His Word, our faith will shield us from Satan’s temptations to doubt our salvation and provide us with victory over second-guessing our salvation. As Christians, we are not victims - we

are victors in Christ! We must by faith act upon God's power for victory. We must by faith rely upon the promises found in His enduring Word and believe them: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:28).

"Encamped upon the hills of light, Ye Christian soldiers rise,
And press the battle ere the night Shall veil the glowing skies.
Against the foe in vales below, Let all our strength be hurled;
Faith is the victory we know, That overcomes the world."

The promises and provisions found in God's word act as a pump which transport faith into our hearts so that we can overcome the Devil. The heart is the control center where all our decisions take place. The Bible says that we must "**Keep (guard) thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life**" (Prov. 4:23). This means our heart is the place from which our life flows out. Our hearts is the inner life or computer chip running our life, which determines our thoughts, decisions, actions, words, and behavior patterns. We must keep or guard our hearts from wrong thoughts such as doubting our faith and salvation. Tozer said, "Keep your heart with all diligence and God will look after the universe."

Psalm 119:11 promises: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart (*my inner control center*), that I might not sin against thee" (*which includes not believing in God's promise of eternal life*).

One Christian lady told me that "It didn't work." She was conveying to me that the victorious plan of deliverance which I shared with her from God's Word did not work. It was a failure and flop. Apparently, she gave in to the Devil's temptations and allowed him to win the battle over her heart and mind and then, like Adam, blamed God (Gen. 3:12). Well, we know that God's plan for victory really does work. But it's our faith that puts God's victorious plan into operation and makes it become applicable, activated, alive, and the answer to living victoriously even over the doubts regarding our salvation. This woman's faith was a flop – not God's plan and way for victory.

"My shield of faith was all intact--His fiery darts bounced back.
I called on God in Jesus' name, I pled the precious blood--
While Satan sneaked away in shame, I met and talked with God!"

Maybe you're thinking, "But I struggle with having faith in God and doubt my salvation. How do I get the faith that I need to shield my soul in times when I'm tempted to doubt my salvation?"

- Recognize that your lack of faith in God's promise of eternal life constitutes a relational problem with Him. You are in one sense calling God a liar (Titus 1:2). You are saying that His Word (John 6:47) and power (1 Pet. 1:5) are not enough to save and deliver you!
- Confess your unbelief as sin and ask God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
- Ask God to increase your faith to trust Him fully (Mark 9:24).
- Don't try to work up faith. Look to Christ for He inspires faith (John 3:14-15; Heb. 12:2).
- Claim your victory in Christ and stop making excuses for living in defeat (Rom. 6:1-14; 1 John 5:4).
- Trust in God for He will not fail you or ever leave you (1 Cor. 1:9; Heb. 13:5).
- Stand on the promises of God – not your feelings (2 Cor. 1:20; 2 Pet. 1:4).

2 Peter 1:4 states: "**Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises (the sanctifying promises of God's Word): that by these ye might be partakers (sharers) of the divine nature (experientially share in God's divine of Godlike nature so you can be victorious over doubting), having escaped (past tense) the corruption (moral decay) that is in the world through lust**" (knowing you have already escaped the power of the world system and all of its allurements).

Think of some of the promises that relate to the life of sanctification and holiness. (1) Freedom from sin's dominion (Rom. 6:14). (2) Grace that is sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9). (3) Power to obey His commands (Phil. 4:13). (4) Victory over the devil (Jas. 4:7). (5) Escape when tempted (1 Cor. 10:13). (6) Forgiveness when we confess our sins (1 Jn. 1:9). (7) Response from God when we call upon Him (Ps. 50:15).

John Bunyan once said:

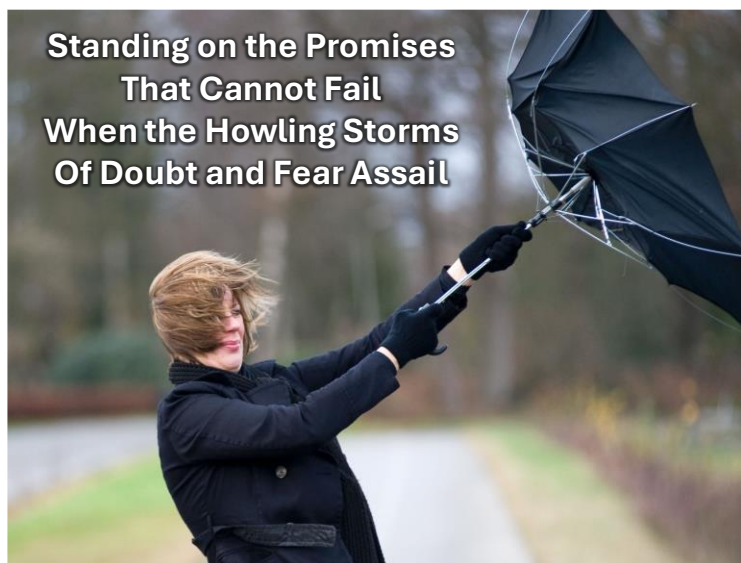
"The pathway of life is strewn so thickly with the promises of God that it is impossible to take one step without treading upon one of them."

2 Peter 1:14 concludes that applying these sanctifying and life-transforming promises of victory to our lives enables each Christian to participate or share

in the delivering power of God's new nature ("the divine nature"). The reason for this is that through the infusion of the new nature we have been given a total provision of victory ("having escaped"). **This is called "the great escape!"** It's not maybe or you might escape if you try hard enough. No! **You have escaped! You are an overcomer! It's a done deal! It's an accomplished fact.** God has given us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). We have new promises, new life, a new nature, new drives, new determination, and new loyalties. God has given us "**a way to escape**" (1 Cor. 10:13) which is His empowering grace and promises.

Of course, each Christian must make a choice. Either he becomes freed from sin (including the sin of unbelief), or he becomes further enslaved to spiritual defeat. The cycle of defeat can be stopped. It does not need to continue indefinitely. There is a way out. There is "**a way to escape**" and you can tap into God's escape program by trusting in His power, provision, and promises that He gives to you.

Here is the good news. According to 2 Peter 1:4, we can stand upon the sanctifying promises of God and through the new nature change our lives. This means we can overcome the doubts regarding our salvation and the defeat and depression that goes along with doubting the promise of eternal life. Stand on the promises of eternal life (John 6:47; 10:28) and God will give you the victory over doubting. "**When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him**" (Isa. 59:19). When Satan attempts to plague your mind with doubts you must raise up your standard which today is God's truth for it's here you find the promises of eternal life. Our standard today is the truth of God's promises!



People say, "Eternal security cannot be true. We must do our part." This is a lie. Don't believe it! God's Word is the compass to guide you when you're lost in the wilderness of temptation. Follow the truth - not the fog of your feelings! Has your faith been fickle? Has your faith been faltering? Hold up the shield! Keep it up or you will surely be overcome by the flaming arrows of Satan and His spiritual army of wicked spirits!

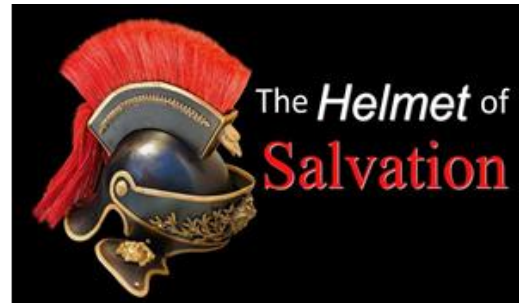
In the time of temptation ("the evil day"), and even before temptation comes (Matt. 6:13), we must make a clear commitment (mentally and prayerfully) to take up the shield of faith, to actively trust God, His Word, faithfulness, and spiritual provision for our lives, declaring our victory over the enemy. Faith is still the victory that overcomes our doubts regarding the finished work of Christ and our legal acceptance before God's throne in Heaven through our identity in Christ's saving work. We are dead, we are buried, and we are alive in Christ sharing His power and victory!

PRAYER OF FAITH: God, I come before You and lift up my shield of faith. I refuse to believe the lies of Satan and put my confidence and faith in the truth that You have given me eternal life, everlasting life, and that I will never perish as Jesus promised in John 10:28. By faith I accept this promise of eternal life above my feelings, my own tendencies to doubt things, and above my emotions. I claim my eternal forgiveness and justification (righteousness) in Christ which I have before Your throne. You have "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). I believe that what Jesus did for me is sufficient to save me forever. He is my High Priest interceding for me today. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

"I will stop doubting that my faith in Christ is not real or genuine and therefore stop doubting my salvation. Satan is trying to cloud my thinking, but I refuse to give in to this deception. I refuse to allow Satan to create these doubts in my mind and heart. I will keep "looking unto Jesus" as my only hope and Savior as Hebrews 12:2 instructs me to do. I renounce the lies and believe the promises of eternal life and the unchanging identity I have in Christ. I am forgiven, I am justified and righteous in Your presence. I know that You are at peace with me. You love me unconditionally in Christ. I know that faith is still the victory that overcomes the world. In Jesus' name, Amen."

SALVATION – The helmet of salvation (deliverance – Eph. 6:17a).

Salvation is used in the sense of being delivered from Satan's power in the Christian life. We have already experienced salvation in the past from the PENALTY of sin but now we need salvation (deliverance) from the POWER of sin and the Devil. **We need sanctifying deliverance from the**



world, the flesh, and the Devil as He seeks to destroy our spiritual lives and belief in God's promise of eternal security. The helmet of salvation speaks of the mind being delivered from all kinds of plaguing sins and one of them would certainly be the sin of doubting our salvation.

The helmet protects the head which signifies that our minds need to be delivered from defeating and devilish thoughts of doubting our salvation as we apply God's truth to our lives. The way the "helmet of salvation" (deliverance) functions is that it helps us to apply the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17b) to our minds and hearts.

In war, the two most vulnerable spots are the heart and the head. When a person is wounded in these places, he will likely die. The enemy soldier wanted to give a vital blow to the physical brain. For this reason, a helmet has always been one of the most important parts of the soldier's armor. The Roman soldier had a bronze helmet with a leather strap on it. This helmet was carried on his shoulder or his side so that he was always ready to wear it in the time of battle. The helmet never left the soldier's side, and he never entered a battle without his helmet on.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 gives a similar analogy:

"But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

The helmet refers to the mind controlled by God which provides a spiritual deliverance (salvation) for our lives on a daily basis. The salvation or deliverance that is in view here is the daily deliverance from the powerful suggestions of the enemy.

Someone has stated:

“The mind is a battlefield where all the decisive battles of life are won or lost.”

The most powerful weapon in Satan’s arsenal is the power of suggestion. When God and His promises control the mind, Satan cannot lead the believer astray in the specific area of doubting his salvation. He will remain firm in his belief system for it based upon God’s unchanging truth. And remember that Jesus taught when a person knows the truth, it always sets them free (John 8:32). If you want to be free of continually doubting your salvation, then you must believe the truth. There is no other way to freedom from doubting your salvation.

The good news is that during the spiritual battle the helmet, or mind controlled by God, will give believers victory over the satanic suggestions that are sent their way. We must remember that the devil defeated Eve by getting into her mind or thinking process.

2 Corinthians 11:3 against states:

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled (*deceived*) Eve through his subtilty (*craftiness*), so your minds should be corrupted (*ethically defiled*) from the simplicity (*devotion*) that is in Christ.”

The problem area is the mind which can become corrupted through satanic temptation. The word “simplicity” speaks of possessing a sincere devotion to Christ, singleness of mind (mental honesty), possessing a heart that is free from all hypocrisy and deceit. It is a devoted mind to Christ and His Word. 1 Peter 1:13 says: “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind.” This is a figure of speech (a metaphor) referring to the ancient Oriental custom of tying up one’s loose flowing robes.

As previously mentioned in our study, the Roman soldier would pull his tunic through his belt so his garment wouldn’t be in his way when he was in battle. Our “girding” is not physical, it is mental, and it is spiritual. The apostle Peter is telling us that we must be spiritually prepared and committed to action. We must keep our thinking (perspective) biblical and accurate or else we will be led astray in the realm of our minds. If Satan gets our mind, then he has got us!

In essence, to “gird up the loins of your mind” means to prepare yourself for the battle over your mind. You must take on the “helmet of salvation” and win the battle over your mind.

Ephesians 4:23 says:

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (*the way you think*).

In this passage the word “spirit” takes on the meaning of possessing a proper outlook or orientation on life. The believer should have a different philosophy of life than unsaved people have. Instead of allowing the “spirit of this world” to permeate our thinking (1 Cor. 2:12), we must begin to allow truth to change our inward thinking, so that we can have a different spirit (outlook or philosophy) on life. In short, we must change the way that we think. To be renewed in the “spirit of our mind” means to change how we think, align our thoughts with God’s Word. We must take God’s perspectives on life and everything, including the many promises of eternal life that He has given to us.

Romans 12:2 once again speaks about the daily mind renewal: “And be not conformed (*molded*) to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing (*renovation*) of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”



To be renewed or renovated in your thinking process is a command. The believer must work on this daily. **Believers need to learn how to reprogram their minds to have victory over the Devil’s mental suggestions that are seeking to sow doubts in their minds regarding their salvation, the free gift of eternal life, and whether or not their faith was real at the time of their conversion.** The Christians must get rid of these plaguing thoughts and replace them with truth. The old saying is true: “Garbage in, garbage out.” If we don’t immediately get rid of the garbage that Satan is planting in our minds, then we will believe it and live by it.

In an interesting piece of science, Nautilus looks at what happens to our brains when we don’t tell the truth. It turns out that the more you lie, the more truthful it seems. Because while a lie might initially appear to the brain as a lie—a fabricated memory sets off your brain’s alarm bell—over time its “source-monitoring” fatigues with each fib. *Lying cements the false details at the expense of the real ones.* Something similar happens when we keep believing the lies of Satan. As the science says, over time our “source-monitoring” system fatigues and we believe the lies are actually true!

This is why we need to practice constant vigilance and guard our minds from being overcome with plaguing thoughts of doubt. We do this by immediately resisting the Devil's doubts which he is attempting to place within our minds (Jam. 4:7. 1 Pet. 5:9).



2 Corinthians 10:5 once again describes the spiritual warfare with the dark and sinister world when it states: **“Casting down (demolishing) imaginations (devilish and untrue reasonings of the mind or intellect), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God (those thoughts that are against God’s character,**

ways, and truth), and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (surrendering our thoughts to the lordship of Jesus Christ – His way, truth, and mastery over our lives).

Sinister thoughts come from sinister beings. We must remember that our minds are not to be a garbage pit or refuge dump. The Bible teaches that our lives are the temple or sanctuary of God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Therefore, we should only allow honorable and truthful thoughts to rule our minds and lives for our bodies are God’s dwelling place – His sanctuary. **Remember again that an untrue and sinful thought passing through our mind does not mean we are sinning against God.** But when we act upon this thought, follow it, and allow it to overcome our spiritual life, it’s then that it becomes sin. We need to draw a line in the sand and demolish the thoughts that are plaguing us and replace them with the absolute standard for truth. In this case, you need to replace your doubting thoughts with the repeated promises of eternal life and God’s power to keep your salvation (John 4:14; 10:28; 17:3; 1 John 5:12-13; 1 Pet. 1:5;). Dealing with doubt involves the immediate removal of these doubts and replacing them with the absolute standard of the “word of God” (Eph. 6:17).

As previously mentioned, the Scripture concludes that we can have thoughts that are **“against the knowledge of God”** (His character, truth, and ways). Satan loves to get us doubting God’s goodness, faithfulness, and love for us

and doubting of God's character can also result in doubting our salvation. The two are often inseparably bound together. So check up on your view of God and be honest with yourself. Are you bitter against Him for something He has allowed to come into your life? Do you have doubts regarding His goodness and faithfulness? If so, you need to work on your relationship with God and your faith in God (1 Cor. 1:9) before you work on the assurance of your salvation. God is always good.



His goodness is not based on what He allows or does not allow to come into our lives. Goodness and faithfulness are built into His eternal nature. Let me repeat something I said earlier.

1 Peter 4:19 says, "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." God is faithful and good for He created us, sustains our lives, gives us every spiritual blessing we need to counter trials (Eph. 1:3), lavishes His love and mercy upon our lives (Heb. 4:16), and enables us to become more like Christ through the pruning and growth process (John 15:1-2). **Therefore, we must think right thoughts about God and when we do, we will think right thoughts about God's promise of eternal life. Stop doubting God and you can then stop doubting your salvation.** Have faith in God and you will have faith in His promise of eternal life.

Paul warned in 2 Corinthians 11:3:

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity (devotion) that is in Christ."

Earl Radmacher said it best:

"The truth of God establishes our vision, straightens our course, and resets our compass on the North Pole of accurate thought."



It is true: "You are what you eat." But it's equally true that you are what you think. What you think, you become. What you feel, you follow. What you imagine, you create. What you sow, you reap (Gal. 6:7). **Victory involves a mental choice.** We choose truth over the lies and temptations of Satan.

This is why we need to place upon our heads the “**helmet of salvation**” (**deliverance**) which is a mind that is being controlled by the truth of God’s Word, including the truth about our eternal salvation and deliverance from God’s wrath and judgment, and the “gift of God which *is* eternal life” (Rom. 6:23). **Proverbs 23:7 states: “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he ...”** The “heart” is the seat of a person’s entire inner being and life which includes the mind, soul, and spirit of a person. What we think determines what we believe and how we live. **Don’t let Satan turn you into a head case!**

An unknown author said:

“I cannot keep the sparrows from flying about my head, but I can keep them from making a nest in my hair!”



Here is the point. Although we cannot escape evil thoughts from racing into our thinking process which is part of the temptation process (Eph. 6:12), we can rid ourselves of these thoughts, not entertain them, and not be overcome by them. If we entertain the thought of lust, rejecting our passion will be increasingly difficult. If we allow sinful thoughts of rebellion to remain in our minds, then we will become vulnerable to acting upon them.

A man was about to go down a stairway that had a low entrance. Above it was a sign that read, “Mind Thy Head!” It meant, “Look out or you will hit your head!” As Christians, God wants us to mind our heads and keep them from being overcome by improper thoughts (like doubting our salvation) and which cause us to no longer live the victorious Christian life. Our head determines how we think and function in life. So we should mind our head!

Someone has correctly concluded:

“What you think means more than anything else in your life. More than what you earn, more than where you live, more than your social position, and more than what anyone else may think about you.”

PRAYER OF DELIVERANCE: Dear Father, I come to you right now and prayerfully and mentally place upon myself the helmet of salvation or deliverance. I realize that sometimes the emotional, physical, and spiritual are mixed together in the battle that I am facing regarding doubting my

salvation. But it makes no difference. I choose victory. I refuse to listen to the beguiling messages of Satan about not possessing salvation and eternal life.

I claim your deliverance over these thoughts. I am replacing them with the truth and promises that You have given to me about salvation. I know that I am “saved to the uttermost” – completely and forever (Heb. 7:25), that I have “eternal salvation” (Heb.5:9), and “the hope of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:8). I know that my salvation is secure in Christ for He said, “Ye shall never perish” (John 10:28). I believe there is “no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). I accept the truth that my deliverance and salvation from hell comes only through Jesus Christ. It truly is finished as Jesus said on the cross (John 19:30). For this reason, I refuse to doubt the “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3) that You have given to me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

SCRIPTURE – “The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17b).

Here is where Paul brings in the importance of God’s truth which is found in the Scriptures (“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”). God’s word is compared to a sword which is used in our time of spiritual battle. It is linked to the previous “helmet of salvation” because we must get the Word of God in our minds to counter Satan’s lies regarding salvation and eternal life.



The Bible acts as a protective sword over our lives during times of temptation. We can use the Scriptures as a sword to protect our lives from Satan’s temptations which are designed to defeat us spiritually which includes doubting our salvation. Hebrews 4:12 also compares God’s truth to a sword: “For the word of God is quick (*living, alive*), and powerful (*energizing and active*), and sharper than any twoedged sword” (*cutting away at our faulty thinking and realigning our thinking with God’s truth about eternal life*).

All the other parts of the armor that we have studied about are absolutely necessary. However, if the believer has no weapon, then he will have nothing to defend himself. The enemy will come in like a raging storm and easily

overcome us if we have no weapon. Isaiah 59:19 says, “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.” According to New Testament teaching, this standard is God’s Word. The emphasis of the “sword of the Spirit” means that it’s the Holy Spirit that drives home the truth to our hearts in the time of temptation so that we defend ourselves against the Devil’s lies. The emphasis on the “word (rhema) of God” in Ephesians 6:17 means that we can verbally say or quote portions of the Bible that help us during the battle that we are facing (doubting our salvation).

Psalm 107:2

“Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.”

This means we must use the Word of God dynamically, effectively, and practically in our combat with the Devil. We must speak it and pray through it so we might believe it and apply the promises of eternal salvation and security to our lives. Jesus repeatedly said during the Devil’s temptation, “It is written” (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). The truth will set you free from doubting your salvation is you speak it and believe it!

This is not difficult to understand. The Roman soldier wore on his belt a short sword which was used for combat fighting. This sword was the only weapon that the Roman soldier had. In a similar fashion, believers are to use the only weapon that they have which is the Word of God. The Bible is likened to the Roman sword because it is an effective way to defeat the enemy during spiritual warfare. The only way that we can do battle with the devil is to resist him with the protection of this sword.

James 4:7 gives this promise:

“Submit yourselves therefore to God (in humble repentance). Resist the devil (*through God’s power and truth*), and he will flee from you.”

We must remember that doing battle with the devil is a truth encounter. **Satan cannot be out-muscled, out-shouted, or out-smarted, but he can be out-truthed!** Truth is the liberating agent and way of victory!

Jesus proclaimed in John 8:32:

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Yes, free!



You can be free from doubts, free from lack of assurance, free in the saving and securing merits of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. When Satan harasses us about our salvation and sows the seeds of doubt in our minds, we must get out our sword and remind ourselves that that we have "peace (*acceptance before God*) through

the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20). We have been freed from the condemnation of God forever (John 3:18; 5:24), but we also have been freed or liberated from the power of sin (Rom. 6:1-14). We are "**free indeed**" (John 8:36).

"I'm free from the fear of tomorrow
I'm free from the guilt of the past.
For I've traded my shackles
For a glorious song.
I'm free praise the Lord free at last!"

You can be free from all guilt of sin and doubt regarding your salvation. The best protection against Satan's lies is to know God's truth! Jesus wants to set you free from this. This means that purpose of every believer should be to prayerfully meditate on God's Word, memorize God's Word, and even speak forth the truth of God's Word so that the Spirit of God will enable our minds to be transformed through the Word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 says:

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually (*energetically*) worketh also in you that believe."

"The devil is subtle, deceptive, and sly
He's clever and tricks us to swallow his lie.
But his cunning methods we're sure to discern
By making God's promises our daily concern."

The Spirit and the Word ("the sword of the Spirit") are the dynamic duo for New Testament Christianity! The Spirit leads us in the truth and

empowers us at the same time. Knowledge of the Bible alone is not enough to defeat the Devil. We must depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to claim the promises of the Bible in the time of temptation. We must “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25) or moment-by-moment be relying upon the Spirit’s control and power for our daily lives.

Someone wrote:

“God expects us to use our God-given senses, led by the Spirit, so that we detect Satan when he is beginning to work.”

Luke 8:12 says: “...then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts...” Satan is a master at his trade! He has been doing this to God’s people, attempting to steal from their hearts the wonderful truth of their eternal life and security in Christ.

Someone else remarked:

“The Christian who is real builds his life on truth, not superstition or lies. It is impossible to live a life that is truly spiritual by believing lies.”

Psalm 119:105

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet (*guiding my steps and thoughts today*), and a light unto my path” (*guiding my steps and thoughts in the future*).

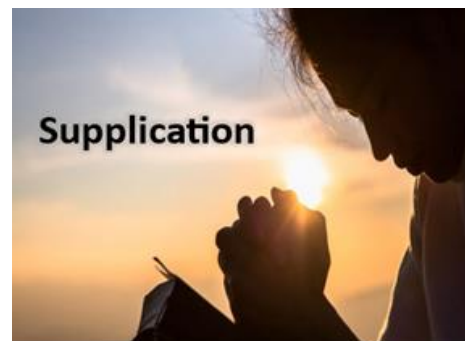
The truth of God’s Word guides us negatively by forbidding certain thoughts and belief patterns. But it also guides us positively by revealing God’s promises and showing us the right way to think.

PRAYER OF SCRIPTURE: Dear Lord, I am mentally taking my sword (the Scriptures) and placing it by my side today and during this moment of temptation. I am ready to do battle with Satan’s lies. There is no condemnation (judgment) to them who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). I’m free! You set me free! Jesus proclaimed that upon believing on Him I possess everlasting life (John 6:47). Lord, You cannot lie and promise that I have been given eternal life (Titus 1:2). I shall never perish (John 10:28). I will not be deceived into thinking my faith in Christ is not real or genuine. Instead of looking at my faith I will continually look to Christ and the promise of eternal life. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11).

Through my identity in Christ, I am dead to the power of the sin of unbelief, I have been buried with Christ (confirming and proving I am no longer a slave to any sin), and I have been risen with Christ (sharing His resurrection power for victory over the sin of doubting). I am also forgiven and justified (declared legally righteous) in God's presence. I accept my IDENTITY in Christ and rest in WHO I AM in Christ. I am not a doubter but a victor in Christ. I'VE DIED TO DOUBTING, DEFEAT, AND DEPRESSION. At this very moment, I am trusting in the Spirit's promptings to guide me in the truth and His power to grant me the victory I already possess in Christ over doubting my salvation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Supplication – “praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” - 18.

We have been breaking down each piece of the armor. This last point reminds us that prayer is what keeps the armor working. It's how we apply God's armor during those times we are in spiritual warfare with the Evil One. Prayer is not said to be part of the armor which Paul was describing. However, even if prayer does not parallel to any piece of the Roman armor, Paul is certainly making the valid point that we must apply the spiritual armor through the ministry of aggressive prayer. In fact, it is probable that this prayer of supplication is linked to the last points which dealt with the “sword of the Spirit” and the “word of God.” This is because our victory can only be experienced in our lives as we apply what we know the Bible (the sword) says through the ministry of aggressive prayer.



“Praying always (the frequency in prayer) with all prayer and supplication (the cry for personal help in prayer) praying in the Spirit (the power and guidance in prayer), and watching (the spiritual alertness in prayer) thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (the concern for others in prayer).

We are to pray through the Scriptures and depend upon God's power in the time of spiritual warfare not only for our deliverance but the deliverance of others. It reminds us that we must use the Scriptures in our time of prayer to defeat Satan's attempts to undermine our assurance and to keep him from

making inroads into the lives of others. Ephesians 6:18 finishes this section on the armor of God.

The Gospel Song stresses the importance of prayer:

“Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you -
Ye dare not trust your own.
Put on the gospel armor,
Each piece put on with prayer;
Where duty calls for danger,
Be never wanting there.”

Our part is to put on the armor by faith and prayer. In doing so, we will be practicing obedience to God – not disobedience. Let’s not beat around the bush! When we doubt God’s Word, we are not only disbelieving but being disobedient to what God says. The Bible says we must “cleanse ourselves” (2 Cor. 7:1) by becoming obedient to God’s Word. We must take the initiative to say no to sin (including the sin of unbelief) and claim our victory in Christ.

Jerry Bridges wrote:

"It is time for us Christians to face up to our responsibility for holiness. Too often we say we are defeated by this or that sin. No, we are not defeated; we are simply disobedient! It might be well if we stopped using the terms victory and defeat to describe our progress. Rather, we should use the terms obedience and disobedience.

“When I say I am defeated by something, I am unconsciously slipping out from under my responsibility. I am saying something outside of me has defeated me. But when I say I am disobedient, that places the responsibility for my sin squarely on me. We may, in fact, be defeated, but the reason we are defeated is because we have chosen to disobey. We have chosen to entertain lustful thoughts, or to harbor resentment, or to shade the truth a little.”

We must keep on praying, keep on claiming our victory, so we don’t keep on doubting! Continuing in prayer (Col. 4:2) is our spiritual lifeline to God. Without prayer there is no hope. But prayer brings God, His promises, and deliverance into focus and enables us to live on the victory side of life.



“Pray when the storm clouds gather overhead.
Hiding the light from You.
Filling your soul with darkness and fear.
Just pray till the light breaks through.

Just keep on praying till light breaks through.
The Lord will answer, He’ll answer you.
God’s keeps His promise, His word is true.
Just keep on praying till light breaks through.”

You will notice that “prayer” and “supplication” are linked with “watching” (Eph. 6:18). The two go hand in hand. **Watching causes us to sight or see the enemy and praying allows us to fight the enemy!** Staying spiritually alert to Satan’s movements while maintaining a strong prayer life work together to bring about victory. But it’s also true that prayer itself keeps us spiritually alert. Like reliable soldiers, we must remain spiritually alert to Satan’s tactics and temptations. In other words, we should maintain a strong prayer life in preparation for our spiritual battles and as we engage our enemy. As we pray, we stay close to God, we acknowledge that we are relying on Him for victory, and we also maintain our spiritual vigilance, so we are not caught off guard during the “evil day” (when Satan tempts us).

“Christian, seek not yet repose;
Cast thy dreams of ease away;
Thou art in the midst of foes:
Watch and pray.”

Spiritual vigilance (“watching” – Eph. 6:18) is linked to prayer. In other words, if we don’t pray, then we won’t remain spiritually sober against the enemy’s attacks and temptations. Prayer keeps us alert and focused on God, His truth, and helps us maintain a level of alertness against Satan and the flesh.

As previously mentioned, in Mark 14:38 Jesus speaks of the importance of spiritual alertness: “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation (*be caught off guard in the time of temptation*). The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak” (*we can become emotionally weary and tired in the battle*). Staying vigilant and praying go hand in hand. **“Watch and pray” are the dynamic duo of the Christian life.** If you do not pray and cast your dependency upon God’s grace for deliverance, then you will not be watchful (vigilant) and temptation will quickly overtake you. You will end up doubting

your salvation. Constand vigilance is necessary or else the Devil will get us doubting our salvation and taking away the “blessed assurance” we can have in Christ.

“Principalities and powers mustering their unseen array,
Wait for thy unguarded hour; Watch and pray.”

In the timeless classic, Pilgrim’s Progress, John Bunyan tells of Christian’s weapon called prayer. He states: “When everything else failed, this would enable him to defeat the fiends in the valley of the shadow.” Here is the point. We don’t have to live in the dark shadows regarding our salvation but in the sure



promise of eternal life. Yes, prayer is what makes the armor work and is the vehicle we use to express our faith in God and dependence upon Him. Prayer is always linked with victory and therefore it is no surprise that Paul’s explanation of the armor is inseparably linked to the ministry of prayer.

The beloved hymnwriter, William Cowper wrote:

“Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer keeps the Christian’s armor bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon His knees.”

John Dorsey described our spiritual battle with Satan in this way.

"I had a battle fierce today
Within my place of prayer;
I went to meet and talk with God,
But I found Satan there.
He whispered, 'You can't really pray,
You lost out long ago;
You might say words while on your knees,
But you can't pray, you know.'

So then I pulled my helmet down,
Way down upon my ears,
And found it helped to still his voice
And helped allay my fears.
I checked my other armor o'er;
My feet in peace were shod;
My loins with truth were girded 'round;
My sword the Word of God.

My righteous breastplate still was on,
My heart's love to protect.
My shield of faith was all intact--
His fiery darts bounced back.
I called on God in Jesus' name,
I pled the precious blood--
While Satan sneaked away in shame,
I met and talked with God!"



THE PRAYER OF VICTORY: Dear God, I BELIEVE that my old self has died with Christ, and I am dead to the power of sin – the sin of unbelief. I believe that I was buried with Christ which gives me the reassurance that I am no longer a slave to doubting my salvation. My doubts were buried with Christ. They must no longer rule over me. I also BELIEVE I was risen with Christ to share His resurrection life and power. For these reasons I no longer must yield to doubts regarding my salvation. Instead, I yield to God and claim my victory through my identity with Christ. I am dead, buried, and now alive in Christ. I AM NO LONGER A DOUBTER FOR THE OLD DOUBTER DIED

WITH CHRIST. I am risen with Christ and rely upon His mighty power for victory over Satan's attempts to get me to doubt my salvation. I am forgiven, justified, and fully, finally, and forever accepted in the throne room of God in Heaven.

I BELIEVE that I am a victor in Christ – not a victim of my circumstances, my personality, my idiosyncrasies, my doubting, or someone who is trapped in their own little world. I was born again to be a winner – not a loser! I read in Scripture that I have been “born of God and overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” I am an overcomer or victor in Christ, the victory has already been provided for me. So today I will “be strong in the Lord and the power of his might” (Eph. 6:10) and stand upon my victorious ground I already possess in Christ. I take back the territory I have surrender to Satan. I claim my victory in Christ over doubting my salvation as I put on the armor of God.

I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved” (Psalm 16:8). I will stand upon the Biblical ground of my eternal security in Christ. I won't be fooled by Satan's lies and deception. I will not follow my feelings but the facts. My faith is always directed toward Christ. I will not submit to my doubts. I am “looking unto Jesus” (Heb. 12:2). I have eternal life right now for “He that hath the son hath life” (1 John 5:12) and this life is “eternal life” (1 John 5:13). I can never be lost from You! Thank You Lord. I plead the precious blood that has granted me forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life through Christ (Rev. 12:11) and claim my promise of victory over the sin of unbelief at this very moment I WILL KEEP ON BELIEVING. In Jesus' name, Amen.