

"Conditional"

Salvation in Christ is a gift of grace, but are there conditions to this gift? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're exploring some conditions found in the word of God.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. When we want to know what Jesus teaches about any topic, we turn to Scripture. The Lord Jesus said to some believers in John 8:31 and 2 that, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." We want God's truth, not a human tradition. We want what God says not what some theologian thinks. True disciples stay in the inspired words found in the Bible. And we'd love to hear from you. We want to be a part of your life each week.

The doctrine of "once saved, always saved" suggests that the Christian, once truly saved, can never do anything to forfeit his salvation and be finally lost in hell. Well, this belief means that Christians have an unconditional security in Christ. Well now the people who believe this say that any person who appears to be a Christian and falls away was never truly converted in the first place. They recognize Christians do sin; but when they sin, what they say is they're punished in this life and will still go heaven.

"What will happen to the born again Christian who willingly forsakes God by turning to a life of neglect and sin or to a false religion?" Well, unconditional security suggests that he is still saved; but conditional security says he's lost. If salvation is conditional, the Scriptures will clearly teach it. Do we find conditional statements in the Scriptures regarding salvation? Now a conditional statement has a qualification to it. It may use the word "if" or it may use a relative clause describing the Christian who's fallen away. And we can't ignore the conditional, qualifying statements in Scripture about whom the grace of God saves. And we want people to know the truth and to remain true to God's word.

Now we offer this study, Conditional, free! If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. Now for those outside the United States, we also have programs and free materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from Hebrews 3:12 to 14, and examine the conditional nature of our salvation.

Our reading today is from Hebrews chapter 3 verses 12 to 14. And it is a caution to brethren about their lives and how they should live for the Lord.

Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,

That's from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father help us always to hold fast to our faith and our assurance. Help us to never fall away and help us never to allow ourselves to become unbelievers as Christians. Father give us strength and help us to stay close to You always. To love You and to love others. In Jesus name, Amen.

Does the New Testament contain conditions for our salvation? Well let's turn to the Scriptures to find out. We can trust them never to lie to us.

The Lord Jesus said in John 8:51, “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” In John 15:2 the Lord said to His disciples who are branches that, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.” Now He explains in verse 6 that, “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.” In verse 10 He states that, “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” Now if one wishes to abide in the love of God and not be cast away, he must abide in Christ, produce fruit, and keep His commandments. Now “If” means “if.”

Now writing to the beloved saints of God in Rome, Paul said in Romans 8:12 to 13, “So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” Now those brothers who set their minds on the flesh become hostile to God and must die. But if they put to death the deeds of the body, they will live. Salvation has conditions.

Paul spoke to the Corinthians who had become Christians in 1 Corinthians 14:1 to 2, “Now I make known to you, brethren, (this is chapter 15:1 to 2 he says,) the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.” They must not only become Christians, they must hold fast to the word that Paul preached, so that their faith would not be in vain. Now if their faith doesn’t hold fast, neither does their salvation.

Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia about some brethren turning to another gospel in Galatians 1:6 to 9. He wrote, “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!”

When people turn away from the gospel teaching found in Scripture to another gospel, they are accursed and you know what, they lead others to be accursed with them. Galatians 5 and verse 4 says clearly to them, “You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” Christ will be no longer associate with any person who changes the gospel; they will no longer enjoy the grace of God. They have turned away from the gospel that brings salvation.

Now Paul was clear to the brethren in Colossians 1:21 to 23 he said, “And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.” Paul feared that false teachings would move the Colossians away from the hope and the truth. Their salvation would only take place if they continued firmly established in the faith and not moved away from the hope of the gospel. When a person ceases to believe the truth, they are in danger of losing their souls.

The author of the book of Hebrews warns brethren who were drifting away from the truth and were falling for the deceitfulness of sin. As we said, Hebrews 3:12 to 14 says, “Take care, brethren, that

there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you (you brethren) will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." "If we hold fast" is indeed a condition. Sadly, some are deceived and hardened by sin. A believer can fall away from the living God into unbelief.

The phrase "fall away" refers to a rebellious attitude of deserting or abandoning one's faith in Christ for the deceitful and hardening pleasures of sin. Sin destroys our faith and our love for God. John warned Christians in 1 John 2:15 to 17, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." You cannot abandon God and then expect God's grace and blessing.

Hebrews 10:26 to 29 speaks to the person who willfully continues in sin: "For if we go on sinning deliberately (willingly) after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?"

When Christians deliberately, willfully, intentionally continue to sin after they have been taught and obeyed the truth, they no longer have the blessing of the sacrifice of Christ for their sins. They have set aside God's teaching in order to practice their sin. This tramples underfoot the Son of God, profanes the blood of the covenant that sanctifies them, and outrages the Spirit of grace. Hebrews 10:31 reminds us, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Believe it, my friend. God sees and knows when we choose sin over Him.

Now Peter knew some might slip back into sin after becoming a Christian. He said in 2 Peter 2:20 to 21, "For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, (that is they became Christians and) they are again entangled in them (that is those sins) and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them." A fallen Christian is in worse shape than someone who never became a Christian. And those who have fallen away need to consider their souls.

Now John talks to Christians about how we choose to live in 1 John 1:6 to 9: he says, "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Now a Christian who walks in darkness chooses to live that way. Becoming a Christian means being rescued from darkness. Going back into the darkness and thinking that we have fellowship with God is deceiving ourselves. We must walk in the light to have fellowship with God and to have the blessing of the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from sin. Walking in the light doesn't mean that we're living perfectly

sinless lives on our own. We can't do that, and we need the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from the sins we still commit. But we must be honest and confess our sins if we wish to be forgiven from all unrighteousness. Thankfully, the blood of Jesus covers all the sins of a Christian who is walking in the light.

Recognizing and confessing our sins is the first step in being forgiven when we have fallen away from Christ. Are you fallen away? Have you quit practicing your faith? Do you realize how you have grieved the Spirit and caused God heartbreak? If you had to face the Lord Jesus today in your spiritual condition, would you be pleasing to Him? You know it's better to be honest with ourselves in this life than to face the Lord unprepared on the Day of Judgment.

Thankfully, God has a way to pardon those who choose to fall away from Him. People who started living like they didn't know God, quit praying, quit reading Scripture, and quit worshiping with the church can come back home to fellowship with God. If they were choosing to walk in darkness, they need to turn their lives around in repentance and start walking once again in the light. They need to quit deceiving themselves that they can do whatever they wish and still please the Lord Jesus who died for their sins.

We should hold fast to our faith. Hebrews 10:39 says, "But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls." We must remain faithful to the Lord and not be moved back into a sinful world. Being honest about our behavior matters. 1 John 2:3 to 6 says, "And by this we know that we have come to know him, (that is we have a relationship with Him, we love Him, that is) if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." Yes, there are conditions to our salvation, and how we walk or live, the choices we make the direction we focus on, that matters.

David prayed to God in Psalm 139:23 to 24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" Perhaps we all need to take an inventory of our own hearts and lives, thinking about how God our Father sees us rather than justifying all the things we do. James 5:16 says, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." Now as we confess our sins and repent of our sins, let's ask God to forgive us; and God will, God will forgive. And I'm so thankful for that promise.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, Father help us never to presume that we can live our lives without thinking about what You've done for us. Without thinking about You and loving You. Without wanting to do Your will. Oh Father, keep our hearts strong and faithful and help us never to turn away from You into unbelief and sin. Father help us to love You and to love others. In Jesus name, Amen.

God has also made conditions to becoming a Christian, and they don't make grace any less a gift. One doesn't earn salvation, but one must receive it God's way. Meeting God's conditions must take place before we're forgiven. John 1:11 to 13 reminds us that, "He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." Now one must believe in Jesus Christ to become a child of God.

One must also repent of sin. The Lord Jesus said in Luke 13:3 that, "unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." The first thing Jesus ever preached was "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at

hand" (Matthew 4:17). In the first gospel sermon, Peter said in response to the people's question at Pentecost in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Paul told the people on Mar's Hill, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30) Now you can't live an ungodly life and then expect to receive the Lord's blessing.

One must also confess faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and that He is also the Lord. Now if you aren't willing to take a stand for Him, you can't be saved. Then you must let God act upon you in baptism. Now baptism is when God works. God washes away your sins (Acts 22:16), He makes you His child (Galatians 3:26 and 7), and He unites you with Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3 to 7). So repent and be baptized today.

Now we hope our study, Conditional, has caused you to want to love God. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. For all our viewers outside the United States, we have free programs on, www.searchtv.org. SEARCH is also on YouTube! So subscribe to our channel, and like our programs. Our channel is "SearchTVMinistry". We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We ask that you show God your love by worshiping at church. Everybody need a church family. And if you can attend, don't neglect worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. Well, keep searching the Word God with us each week and we'll be back next week. And always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.