

Security in Christ: Conditional...or not? – Part 2

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- [Adrian Bateman, Eternal Security](#)

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By Adrian Bateman

The plain fact of Scripture is this – practical righteousness, holiness of behavior, is called for in the Bible. Therefore, in no way am I encouraging unholiness of living!!! I would that ALL who name the name of Christ in truth would live holy and pure lives. But holiness does not save us. Nowhere is holiness in us to be found at the root of our salvation. There we only find the Cross of Christ, the righteousness of Christ. Only His righteousness is at our root ... and, truth be told, His righteousness alone appears in our fruit, as well. All that is good in us is Christ. So the legalists who confuse our supposed goodness or holy behavior with true goodness and holiness which is produced only by Christ in us are not proclaiming scripture, they are proclaiming error. Once we are truly saved, what is subsequently at issue by our behavior, then, is not our eternal soul but our eternal rewards.

Now please do not think that I am condemning those who believe in conditional security. I believed it for my entire Christian life until I began applying the same standards of exegesis to what I had been taught in my early Christian life as I now bring to the doctrines I teach. And believe me, it was not an easy thing to do. My entire being revolted at the thought that somehow I could do nothing at all, either to be saved or to stay saved. All of the arguments against unconditional eternal security battled in my head against the idea that somehow we were unshakably secure. It seemed so wrong that I could be saved and my salvation was secure no matter what I did. After all, if I do what the Bible says will keep me out of Heaven, then how can it not keep me out of Heaven? Yes, I can confess and repent ... but what if I were to die before I did that? Or what if I repeat the act at some point. Does that not mean my repentance was obviously deficient. I guess I didn't really mean it!

Do you see what has now happened? The burden is back on me. I am now responsible to keep myself in the love of God. The preservation of my salvation is now dependent on me.

But in the midst of this struggle, I began to realize that, by that same thinking, it was so wrong that I—an evil sinner—should be saved in the first place! After all, my sin was vile before God. He would be just and right if He condemned me. Yet He did ALL necessary to save me! I played no role, other than accepting His finished work with the faith that He Himself placed in me. My sin, while separating me from God, did not keep God from saving me!

And so, slowly during this process, I came to the realization that God isn't concerned about sin in the same way we are. (And, no, I did not say that God doesn't care about sin. What I am saying is that His perspective on it is vastly different from ours.)

We get our perspective largely from the Old Testament where people living under the law were given rules by which to live and each offence resulted in a punishment or a sacrifice to avoid the punishment. Under that system of law, sin became prominent. And by focusing on what the law required them to focus on, we have pulled it out of context. God did not teach by the law that man can reach a point where he does NOT sin. He taught by the law that man can never NOT sin ... and that sinlessness without God is impossible. That is why the system of sacrifices to expiate sin. They were not for the blatant sinner, they were for all Israel—for all Israel sinned: just as all mankind has sinned.

But God does not want men and women to sin because it is totally against His nature. Sin is an affront to Him. And it is an insult to our claim to be His. But the law that showed us sin could never be the agent of eliminating our sin. It only, as Paul said in [Romans 3:20](#) could bring us an awareness of sin. And by being aware of sin we were now guilty and under a sentence of death ([Romans 4:15](#); [5:12](#)). Not only that, but we now increased in sinful desires because of the knowledge of sin given through the law ([Romans 7:8](#)). Therefore, as the Holy Spirit spoke through Paul, “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law ([1 Corinthians 15:56](#)). So law keeping can never produce righteousness.

But Scripture reveals to us that in our lives God is far more concerned with our faith. Even under the Old Covenant, faith was the key that underlay the system of substitutionary sacrifices. It was not the sacrifice but the sinner's faith in the efficacy of the sacrifice—on the basis of God's Word that said the sacrifice would cover the sin of the sinner—that enabled the sinner to be cleansed and remain among the people.

On the eve of His crucifixion when He knew Peter was about to both deny Him and swear an oath before God on pain of being cast forever into hell that he did not know Christ, Jesus confronted Peter. He told him that Satan had sought permission to sift him and the other disciples like wheat. And then He said, “But I have prayed for you, Peter.” Now, this is a crucial moment. Both the denial of Christ before men and the blasphemy of making God appear to support a lie were sins of the worst order. The Bible says both are worthy of death. Not just worthy of death, but sure to result in the guilty one ending up in eternal hell fire. Faced with this knowledge, how did Christ pray? Did He pray to the Father that Satan not be allowed to sift Peter? Did He pray that Peter would not commit the sins of denial and blasphemy? No. He told Peter what He prayed for. And it was this: “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” ([Luke 22:32a](#)) That was Jesus' sole concern: not that Peter might sin, but that through the events to come Peter's faith might not fail. And so sure was Jesus that his prayer to the Father was heard that He continued

speaking to Peter, saying, "... and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." ([Luke 22:32b](#)) Not "if you are converted", not "on the chance you are converted", not "should it happen that you are converted" ... but "WHEN you are converted." (Incidentally the word converted simply means "to be turned back [to the right path].")

See? Sin is not the main problem. Not any more. It was dealt with once and for all by Jesus Christ at Calvary and the eternally effectual deliverance from the penalty of sin is imputed to us by grace through our faith in that finished work. This is why sin itself is not the concern, it is our faith.

Then why should we be concerned with sin any longer? We'll examine that question in part 3.