

“Pressing On”

Hebrews 5:11-6:8

Let's Review

5:11 – His readers had violated their consciences so often that they were losing the capacity to believe spiritual truth.

5:12 – Three decades had passed since Pentecost. Jewish believers were naturally the ones who should rise up first as elders and teachers of the church. The Gentiles who were flooding in desperately needed their leadership. Instead they needed to go back and recommit to the basic principles of Christianity.

5:13, 14 – Believers ought to exercise their capacities to discern spiritual truth by regular study in God's Word.

6:1 – The author does not believe his readers have completely abandoned Christ so after an upcoming warning (6:3-12) he will shortly return to the deeper teaching about Christ.

6:1, 2 – He lists what he considers the “elementary principles” (5:12). They are repentance, faith, baptism, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection and the final judgment at which Jesus Christ will be our judge.

6:3 – The author admits that God's assessment of the spiritual condition of his readers may be worse than his own. The good news is he keeps writing.

6:4, 5 – Here the author lists the works of God which take place in a believer when he or she is born-again. They are so real that no one who has had these take place can honestly say they don't know that Jesus is God's Son and the Savior. Anyone who has had these things take place and then abandons Him knows what they're doing is terribly wrong. These works are:

- Revelation knowledge about Jesus
- The righteousness of faith
- The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit
- The inner voice of the Holy Spirit
- The supernatural gifts of the Spirit

6:6 – This is the ugly reality of what takes place when a person who knows Jesus Christ renounces Him. In order for a person to end up in such a state they must first do such damage to their own conscience that they destroy their own capacity to repent (He 12:17; 1Jn 5:16; 2Jn 1:7-11).

6:7, 8 – Just as some fields produce crops and others weeds when rained on, some people bear spiritual fruit and others lawless attitudes and behaviors even after the Holy Spirit has been “rained” on them.

The Question

Is it possible for a new heart to return to old attitudes? (Gal 5:1, 13-25)

The Change

What are the changes that God works in us when we are born-again? (Heb 8:10, 11; Col 2:9-14)

- Indwelling Spirit
- Obedient heart
- Forgiveness of sins

The Warning

Now listen to the warnings given to born-again people

• Colossians 3:5-17 (put aside: v 8; put on: v 12)

Clearly I'm called to an active partnership with God: to pursue the new potential He has place in me. I still have a will capable of wrong choices and rebellion. I am still responsible to:

- Feed my spirit
- Repent regularly
- Obey Christ's commands
- Accept the suffering that comes with belonging to Him (Heb 13:13)
- Humbly believe the apostle's teaching about Him

None of these things is too hard for any of us to do, and the Holy Spirit will gladly provide the resources we need so we aren't reliant on our weak human capacities.



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The Wrong Answer

Each of us deeply needs to be certain we are going to heaven and when we read warnings like this in Hebrews it can be unsettling and frighten us. But to build our confidence on a philosophy that says:

- I'm incapable of sinning anymore as a Christian...
 - My will is gone so I can no longer leave Christ...
 - There is no urgency for me now as a believer to repent and feed my spirit unless I desire to achieve rewards in heaven...
- is to ignore massive portions of the New Testament and the reality of what we experience day to day.

The Truth

The truth is my Christian walk is a partnership between me and God. God has a responsibility to:

- Forgive my sins
- Fill me with His Spirit
- Speak to me through His word
- Surround me with His people
- Guard me with His angels
- Guide me away from temptation
- Teach and discipline me like a father
- Refresh me when I worship
- Grant me spiritual authority over the devil
- Lead me into His plan for my life

And until I see Jesus face to face I am still responsible to:

- Feed my spirit
- Repent regularly
- Obey Christ's commands
- Accept the suffering that comes with belonging to Him (Heb 13:13)
- Humbly believe the apostle's teaching about Him

Conclusion

It is possible for my heart to become so hard that I can no longer repent and I end up worse than before I was a Christian (Heb 6:6; 10:26; 12:16, 17; Esau, Ge 25:29-34; 27:34-38).

- There is no force in heaven and earth that can take me away from Him (Ro 8:35-39)
- There is no weakness in me He will not forgive (Ro 8:31-34)

So, if I want to go to heaven more than I want the things of this world, my salvation is absolutely certain. In fact, without this assurance we can never function effectively as Christians.

- John Wesley's Journal entry for May 24, 1738.
- Guy P. Duffield, The Security of the Believer, 1968.

Questions

- Do you know for certain that if you died tonight you'd go to heaven?
- If you were to die and stood before God and He asked you, "Why should I let you into My heaven?" what would you say?
- Describe something God did to draw your heart back to Him lately.