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## Salvation Safety?

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### Summary

Here is a summary of the main points to do with whether a Christian can lose their salvation or not. It's got the major points from this article, most of them with a representative Bible verse.

It's possible for righteous people (these are the saved) to stop being righteous, and so come under the Lord's judgement.

But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die.

Ezekiel 18:24 (ESV)

Paul knew this was possible, and guarded against it.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (ESV)

We have to remain in Jesus in an ongoing way to keep our salvation.

But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.

Colossians 1:22-23 (NIV) first sentence

It's not just up to us though. In fact, it's God who keeps us safe, and He enables us to continue in Him. Our salvation depends on us remaining in Jesus though.

The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

Psalms 145:20 (KJV)

If we fall away from God we must repent, and if we do God will take us back.

"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct," declares the Lord GOD. "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you.

"Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel?

"For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

Ezekiel 18:30-32 (NASB®)

The Bible offers strong evidence that just one unrepentant instance of some sins like adultery or murder leads to spiritual death. David's sin was an apparent example of this, until he confessed it.

Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.

2 Samuel 12:13 (NIV)

This suggests that even God's children should be deathly afraid of some sins.

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NIV)

This doesn't mean we have to be literally perfect. Paul, a saved person, said he still had a sin nature.

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.  
Romans 7:18 (ESV)

However, Paul controlled this sin nature (e.g. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 above), relied on God to save him from it, and didn't indulge in sins like the people described in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 above. He lived by the Spirit.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.  
Romans 8:12-14 (NIV)

There is clear teaching in the Bible that *saved people can lose their salvation*. It's not correct to think that every fallen Christian was never saved to begin with. Fallen believers can even be lost to the point of no return.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,  
And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,  
If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.  
Hebrews 6:4-6 (KJV)

Jesus even seems to have taught that saved people can fall away.

Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.  
Luke 8:13 (NIV)

Judas is a well described Biblical example of a follower of Christ who rejected Jesus and suffered spiritual death.

Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.”  
Acts 1:24-25 (NIV)

A major reason the issue of whether a saved person can lose their salvation is so important to believe correctly about, is that the Bible warns very strongly against false teachings.

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.  
2 Peter 2:1-3 (ESV)

To read about the things discussed in this summary in more detail, continue on through the article.

## Introduction

We should make an important point right up front. This article talks a lot about our responsibilities as Christians, including persevering in the Lord, not sinning, and repenting. But this shouldn't be taken as a teaching that we are saved by these things. Rather, we are saved by God's grace, through our faith in His Son Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.  
Ephesians 2:8-10 (ESV)

To be saved, so that we can be in Heaven for eternity, God requires us to have faith in Jesus Christ. However, the Bible shows that this needs to be a *true* faith, one which spills over into our lives and actions. Or should that be, one which defines our lives and actions? It needs to have certain aspects to it, or certain things going along with it, like repentance, perseverance, and so on. The True Faith (<http://www.dansfriends.com/saved6.html>) section of the Being Saved article talks about this in much greater detail.

Not having these things in our lives can cause us to be in deadly spiritual peril. We are definitely saved by faith, but as the Bible says,

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds?  
Can such faith save him?  
James 2:14 (NIV)

So, what if there is something wrong with our faith? (as there often seems to be in our lives.) What about when people...

- ... were raised as Christians, but it doesn't really impact their life?
- ... once believed in Jesus, but have stopped believing or don't take it seriously?
- ... believe with their head but don't seek God with their heart?
- ... are sincere but misled by false beliefs or ideas?
- ... are seeking God but keep falling back into sin without repenting?

...or something along those lines. Of course, many Christians would have to admit to some of the above at various points of their life - especially that last item! We shouldn't try to pretend we are perfect or without sin when we aren't. Perfection should be our goal, but we shouldn't go around pretending we haven't ever failed. Being honest before God in light of our sins and repenting and seeking Him is what He wants.

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Luke 18:9-14 (NIV)

There's no doubt that there are plenty of Bible verses warning that the immoral won't be with God for eternity. But what happens if a saved child of God falls away from the Lord - perhaps in one of the ways described in the above list? Can the truly saved become unsaved? This article focuses on verses which address this topic.

## Salvation Loss

It can be confusing working out what the Bible says about this issue. Some verses warn about salvation loss, but others encourage us that there is security for God's children who stay in Him. First we will learn what some verses about salvation loss say, and then see some teachings about salvation security. Actually, many of these passages both warn and encourage at the same time.

More teachings that the saved can die spiritually if they turn away from the Lord can be found two and three sections ahead in the Can Just One Sin do It? (<http://www.dansfriends.com/osas5.html>) and Lost or Never Saved to Begin With? (<http://www.dansfriends.com/osas6.html>) sections.

## Righteous people and believers who return to sin

The Bible teaches that righteous people are God's children, but it also teaches that they can stop being righteous.

But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die.  
Ezekiel 18:24 (ESV)

We know from the Bible that people who carry out injustice and abominations aren't going to be with God for eternity. Turning away from righteousness makes people die spiritually. We are also told that a brother, or Christian, may wander away, which makes him a sinner and bound for death unless he is brought back.

My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.  
James 5:19-20 (NIV)

The following is also a useful verse.

and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.  
1 Timothy 3:6 (NASB®)

A "convert" must be referring to a Christian. Doesn't falling into Satan's condemnation mean they wouldn't be going to Heaven?

## Not persevering or continuing

These passages show it is possible for us to not persevere or abide in Christ's teaching, resulting in God's displeasure and us losing what we worked for. These warnings were written to believers. At the same time, we do have hope in the Lord if we live by faith and abide in His teaching.

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while,

“He who is coming will come and will not delay.  
But my righteous one will live by faith.

And if he shrinks back,  
I will not be pleased with him.”  
Hebrews 10:36-38 (NIV)

Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.  
2 John 1:8-9 (ESV)

The next main section of this article, Salvation Safety (<http://www.dansfriends.com/osas4.html>), also shows that continuing in the Lord is required for salvation.

## A lesson from 1 Corinthians

Paul, one of the heroes of Christianity, knew there was a danger of being disqualified from his prize of life through evil, so he exercised self control.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.  
1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (ESV)

Paul then immediately goes on to use Israel as an example of a people who did move out of God's favour by their sins. The Israelites drank from Christ the rock, which certainly implies they knew God in a saving way.

They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.  
1 Corinthians 10:3-4 (NIV)

Despite this, when they sinned their evils still brought death from God.

Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.  
1 Corinthians 10:5-10 (ESV)

This certainly fits with the Lord telling the Israelites that His covenant with them depended on them following Him (e.g. Leviticus ch 26). Then Paul continues:

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.  
1 Corinthians 10:11-13 (NIV)

So the Bible says this falling away of the Israelites is a warning to believers in Christ - aren't Christians the people who have this wonderful fulfillment on them? There is a danger that believers can fall from being God's children, as Israel did. God will provide a way out for us though, and won't let us be tempted too far. We don't have to fall, if we rely on Him.

## Unfaithful servant

This passage demonstrates the difference between faithful and unfaithful servants. Both people in this story were servants, and it is implied that they both began as followers of Jesus. Regardless of this, their outcomes were very different.

And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?  
"Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.  
"Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.  
"But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk;  
the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.  
Luke 12:42-46 (NASB®)

The faithful servant is blessed and given responsibility over the master's possessions, but the unfaithful servant is punished and put with those who don't believe. We can be certain God's children aren't placed with unbelievers.

## Believing in vain

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.  
1 Corinthians 15:1-2 (NIV)

The message above was written to Christian brothers, and they were told their salvation was conditional on their holding fast to the word of the Lord. To believe vainly doesn't sound like a state of salvation.

Thus far...

There is a fairly obvious pattern in these verses: the saved may indeed fall away from Christ, and into sin, and so die spiritually. But the Bible also has many verses which assure us of our security if we remain in Jesus.

## Salvation Safety

Although the Bible teaches that salvation can be lost by turning away from God, it also encourages us with teachings about how the Lord loves us and keeps us safe in Him if we remain in Him. There are also verses showing how He will accept us back from deserting Him, if we repent and return.

### Continuing and standing firm

The following passages make it clear that a condition of salvation is our continuing in Jesus. Notice how every one of these quotations shows that *ongoing* commitment to the Lord is necessary, not just belief that occurred in the past. We can see this by the continuous sense of the words used, like stands, keeps, continue, abide, remain, practice, watch, persevere, and believes. If we do these things, we will remain in the Lord and be with Him for eternity.

At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Matthew 24:10-13 (NIV)

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Colossians 1:21-23 (NIV)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death."

John 8:51 (NASB®)

Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

1 John 2:24-25 (KJV)

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:10-11 (ESV)

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

1 Timothy 4:16 (NIV)

Again, more than a past belief in Jesus is needed for our salvation.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 11:25-26 (NASB®)

## God keeps us safe

As well as being told to continue in the Lord, we are also taught in the Bible that God Himself keeps us safe.

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

Jude 1:24-25 (KJV)

It's amazing to think that we hopeless humans are looked after so wonderfully by God! If we just follow Him, He will keep us from falling. Let's not forget that this safety is conditional on us seeking Him though.

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is

best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:4-11 (NIV)

Paul was confident that the Philippians' good work and partnership in God's gospel would be completed through the Lord. It doesn't seem unreasonable to think that if God would complete their partnership in the gospel, He would also bring to fruition their salvation through Jesus. Paul's reason for feeling confident is that he would have them in his heart. This seems to mean he would pray for them. His prayer for them alludes to the Philippians' salvation, by hoping for them to be blameless and pure until Jesus returns. God is definitely involved in sustaining us in Him. It's not up to us to somehow be able to remain His children after salvation by sheer willpower! However, many other Bible passages show that it isn't correct to say God's sustaining of us removes our ability to walk away from Him again if we wish.

Another passage which shows that God keeps us safe and that we have a sure salvation through faith is 1 Peter 1:3-5.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,  
unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,  
who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:3-5 (ASV)

God Himself guards us through our faith. What more could we need in life? Let's make sure we don't stop having that true faith. At the risk of harping on, being guarded by God is no excuse for not living a righteous life. Just a bit further on in that Bible chapter we are urged to be holy (v 15) and to live with fear (v 17). We have been purified through obedience to the truth (v 22). We need to keep on doing these things, repenting when we sin, so that we can be called God's children.

The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

Psalm 145:20 (KJV)

## Repentance

Transgressions lead to death even for those who once followed God, but their subsequent repentance leads to life.

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV)

"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct," declares the Lord GOD. "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel?"

"For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."  
Ezekiel 18:30-32 (NASB®)

You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.  
Romans 11:19-23 (NASB®)

God can bring people (in the above passage, disobedient Israelites) back "again" if they return to Him. A person only *returns* to something they once knew (the Lord) - they don't return to something they never knew. In contrast, the one who isn't cut off is the one who continues in the Lord's kindness and has faith. This is a warning that we will be cut off if we fall like Israel. At the same time, this passage shows how fallen people can be brought back to the Lord, which is very comforting. We can repent. And if we understand correctly, Paul goes on to say that Israel as a people are going to repent.

As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!  
Romans 11:28-33 (ESV)

This is hard to understand! We don't understand it very well. It seems Israel will return to God. He can even use disobedience for our eventual salvation. Isn't it wonderful? We can repent. It's also worth noting that the irrevocable nature of God's calling doesn't preclude an individual from falling into sin and death - as is amply demonstrated elsewhere in the Bible. It's hard to understand how this can be. We certainly don't understand it. Maybe this is part of the amazing way that God guards us (see God Keeps us Safe, above) and how He is so patient and merciful. But we need to believe everything the Bible says, and not leave out parts which don't agree with our understanding.

## Jesus' sheep and Peter

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

John 10:27-29 (ESV)

John 10:27 above describes the ones who cannot be snatched away as Jesus' sheep who follow Him, in the continuous tense. This agrees well with the above passages which show it is those who continue to persevere in the Lord who are safe from being snatched away. It doesn't appear to say believers can't stray under their own steam. Jesus Himself even said His sheep would fall away:

"You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written:

" 'I will strike the shepherd,  
and the sheep will be scattered.'

Mark 14:27 (NIV)

A description of some of them leaving is given in this verse.

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

John 6:66 (KJV)

Jesus knew His followers could fall away from Him, and spoke to them to prevent it.

"I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away.

John 16:1 (ESV)

Another example is Simon Peter, one of Christ's apostles, whose steadfastness in faith He prayed for.

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

But he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.”

Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.”

Luke 22:31-34 (NIV) (the first 'you' is plural)

Peter did fall away from Him (e.g. Mark 14:66-72). Being a follower of Christ didn't prevent that. In the above Luke passage, Jesus says Peter will turn back. This shows that he fell away, implying spiritual death until he returned. It also shows God's mercy in bringing him back. In fact, Jesus is a shepherd who searches for any of His lost sheep!

"What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?

"When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

"And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'

"I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Luke 15:4-7 (NASB®)

It's not somehow all up to us to be saved. We have a Lord Who not only keeps us safe in Him, but Who spoke and prayed to help His followers remain faithful, and Who seeks out His lost.

## Famous assurance from Romans

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 8:28-30 (ESV)

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39 (ASV)

Isn't this a wonderful comfort to know? But we need to understand that these amazing assurance passages link in with the whole rest of the Bible. Other passages make it clear that we can fall away and walk away into sin if we don't stand firm in Christ. The above passages from Romans don't mention our own unfaithfulness being unable to separate us from God's love. Rather, they confirm what we have been saying. Safety and justification are for people who love the Lord (v 28) and are called by Him (v 30). It is then that the Lord keeps us safe from being snatched away. But, if we remember other verses in this article, it doesn't necessarily mean that it's impossible for us to *walk* away. It's things which are outside of us, powers and creatures and so on, which are mentioned as being unable to separate us from God's love. This is greatly in accord with John 10:27-29 above, which shows that our security exists in tandem with us following Jesus our Saviour. It's a two way street.

Thus far...

We can see from the above verses that those who end up in Heaven certainly have persevered, by the help of God. He really does help us and bring this about in us. But that doesn't mean we are unable to turn our backs on Jesus, and so lose our salvation. Instead, we are counselled to remain in the Lord, to persevere in doing so, and that if we do we will be saved. If we don't, we are in danger. Thankfully, we can also repent and return to Him if we do fall, and He searches for us to bring us to Him.

So if we can lose our salvation, what exactly does it take to lose it? Is it only a lifestyle of sin, or can just one instance kill us spiritually?

## Can Just One Sin do It?

One doctrine held by some people is that only habitual or 'lifestyle' sinning causes us to lose our salvation. Does the Bible support this view?

### The example of adultery

We'll take the example sin of adultery. Logically enough, the Bible seems to define an adulterer as someone who commits the act of adultery.

" If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.  
Leviticus 20:10 (NIV)

It doesn't say that only *habitual* adulterers come under judgment. It is clear what the spiritual state of adulterers is.

but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.  
"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.  
Matthew 5:28-29 (NASB®)

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.  
Hebrews 13:4 (ESV)

It doesn't seem as though Jesus intended to mean that only habitual unrepentant adulterers are flung in Hell. And the Hebrews reference doesn't say that only repeated adultery will be judged. It seems that adultery means you forfeit your salvation, full stop.

David

David was one of Israel's kings in ancient times. He lusted after a woman who was married, and so he slept with her and had her husband killed in war (this story is found in 2 Samuel chapters 11-12). If we apply the above verses about adultery, then until he repented and returned to the Lord, David must not have been saved. Maybe we can see this in the following passage.

Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."  
Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."  
2 Samuel 12:13-14 (NIV)

Notice how David admits his sin, and straight away he is basically told he has been forgiven for it. Interestingly, this doesn't mean that there was no Earthly punishment for his forgiven sin. David's need for repentance is also illustrated when he asked for mercy for his evil.

Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin!

For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.  
Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you may be justified in your words  
and blameless in your judgment.  
Psalm 51:1-4 (ESV)

If he remained in the Lord during his adultery and murder, it doesn't seem to make sense that David would ask for mercy and cleansing, and speak of God judging. It seems reasonable to conclude that David's one act of adultery and one act of murder left him under God's judgement, and not counted among God's children, until he confessed and repented.

## Adam and Eve

Another example of the fall of the righteous through one sin is Adam and Eve. They were apparently created in a righteous state, and were allowed to stay in Eden with God. God said:

but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."  
Genesis 2:17 (NASB®)

The Lord didn't say it was ok to eat just a bit, or not eat it habitually. He said not to eat from it. But they did, and that one act of disobedience caused Adam and Eve to be under the curse of death. It was Satan rather than God who said doing it would not bring death.

The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!  
Genesis 3:4 (NASB®)

## Deadly sins

The belief that only habitual adulterers and sinners go to Hell if they are unrepentant is not accurate. This gives us a broader application to verses such as the following, which list some sins that lead to spiritual death.

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.  
1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NIV)

Perhaps reading this passage as a checklist of "don'ts" isn't the best approach. It may be examples rather than a checklist of deadly sins. It is really useful either way though. Everybody, including Christians, should be afraid of committing the above sins - not just of living a lifestyle of them! They are pretty wilful acts. Nobody can indulge in them and expect to be with the Lord for eternity.

It doesn't mean that if you've ever committed them, you're not going to Heaven - it means that if you haven't *repented* of them and sought God, and are still in them, then you aren't going to Heaven. This is true for people who believe in Jesus too. Remember, repentance is turning away from sin and towards the Lord. Confession is also involved in this.

Interestingly, as well as sins which lead to death like those in the above passage, there are sins which don't result in spiritual death.

If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.  
1 John 5:16-18 (NIV)

We don't know what the sins that do and don't lead to death are. We really don't feel we have the understanding to say. Maybe we shouldn't even take these verses to be referring to specific sins. We don't know. It's worth noting, however, that we are still told that prayer and relying on the Lord for life are appropriate even regarding sins that don't lead to death. In addition, the final sentence of the passage shows that being in God and continuing to sin are mutually exclusive things. There is something else worth pointing out, too.

## Paul's sin nature

Paul said that he still had sin dwelling in him - though we know he was a very holy man and was definitely saved.

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Romans 7:15-20 (ESV)

Paul was saved, but he still had sin dwelling in him, in his sin nature or flesh. He didn't literally have no goodness in himself, because he knew Jesus and had the Holy Spirit in him. However, he did have a sin nature, which had no goodness in it. The sin nature is part of us all, and it is corrupt. It means that we are always going to be imperfect on Earth, no matter how much we get rid of wrongdoing. Even Paul still had this sin nature in him, though with God's help and enabling, he was strict with himself, didn't commit evils, and properly repented of his sins. He didn't indulge this sinful nature, and he couldn't have won against it apart from God. The fact that Paul was spiritually saved despite his flesh shows that God doesn't require us to be perfect (though we should strive for it). Rather, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for us. This is encouraging.

However, it's very important to realise that even though Paul had a sin nature, he definitely wasn't doing evils like those listed in the 1 Corinthians passage above, and he wasn't always falling into sin. One Bible section showing this is in 1 Corinthians 9 and 10 (see the earlier discussion in the Salvation Loss (<http://www.dansfriends.com/osas3.html>) section). There, Paul said he disciplined and controlled his body, and that sinning means death even for God's people. If he controlled his body to avoid spiritual death, surely it means Paul didn't indulge in sin! Therefore in the Romans passage above, when Paul says that he can't do right and keeps doing evil, he must have been describing his sinful nature rather than an ongoing problem of sinful behaviour in his life. We can further think this because of what Paul wrote in continuing this part of Romans.

Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?  
Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the  
law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.  
Romans 7:24-25 (ESV)

So Paul was relying on Jesus to save him from this sin nature. Without Him he had no hope of controlling his sin nature, no matter how much he truly wanted to. Christ is the One who saves us, by faith rather than works, but Paul knew to be saved by Him we still absolutely cannot live by our sinful nature. God enables us to achieve this through Jesus.

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did:  
sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for  
sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,  
so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk  
according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.  
Romans 8:3-4 (NASB<sup>®</sup>)

Paul makes it abundantly clear that our salvation doesn't give us permission to be sinful.

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.  
Romans 8:5-11 (ESV)

This passage shows that to live sinfully means death, being hostile to the Lord, not submitting to His law, and not being able to please Him. This seems to be equated with not having the Spirit and not belonging to God. In contrast, if we have God's Spirit and Christ in us, and live by the Spirit instead of obeying our sinful flesh, we have peace and life and we belong to God. God gives us life despite our corrupt sinful nature. This is such an opposite situation than for the people who live by their flesh and don't have Jesus.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you

received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8:12-17 (NIV)

If we live by our flesh, we will die spiritually and lose our salvation. The Holy Spirit enables us to live for God though, rather than sinfully. This is a necessary characteristic of our salvation and our being called children of God, who are the ones who will go to Heaven.

It seems obvious that Paul didn't think he could commit sin, be unrepentant, and still expect Jesus' blood to be covering him. Instead, Paul lived by putting his sincere faith in Christ, seeking God wholeheartedly and obeying and relying on Him, and genuinely repenting of his sin. Doing this didn't stop Paul from having a sinful nature, which he had to battle and guard against so it didn't control him and lead him back to his sins - which would have made him unsaved. But his seeking and obedience and faith resulted in Jesus' blood truly atoning for his sins and making him clean in God's eyes. We don't have to be perfect to be saved, but at the same time we can't indulge in evil. Doing so is spiritual death.

Thus far...

Committing sin is dangerous even for Christians. We can say that even one instance of sins such as adultery, murder, homosexuality, swindling, or so on, leads to spiritual death for a Christian until they return to God. This doesn't mean that God requires us to be perfect, as He knows we have a sin nature, but it does mean He requires us to put our faith in His Son Jesus, live by the Spirit and be a sincere repentor. But if a believer dies because of sin, does it mean they were never really saved to begin with, or that they did lose their existing salvation?

## Lost or Never Saved to Begin With?

There is a belief that God's wonderful promises and commands about perseverance in Him mean that a saved person cannot lose their salvation, no matter what they do. Therefore, because we have Biblical warnings about fallen Christians, it must mean these fallen Christians were never truly saved to begin with - because salvation is impossible to lose.

Surely there are indeed people calling themselves Christians, but who never were. There doesn't seem to be a Biblical reason to think that is always the case with fallen Christians though. The Bible often describes believers who fall away from Jesus as becoming unsaved, rather than always having had some unsaving kind of faith. In this section we will discuss verses which show that truly saved Christians can fall and lose their salvation.

## The saved can definitely die

The following verses very clearly show that people who are saved may then continue in or return to their sins, losing their salvation. We know they were previously saved, because they are described as such.

For if we go on sinning deliberately 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 spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

Hebrews 10:26-29 (ESV)

This passage is talking about people who received the knowledge of Jesus' truth from the Lord, and who were sanctified. This must be referring to once truly saved people, not people with a counterfeit faith that never saved them. Their status of having no sacrifice for their sin anymore, but instead having fear of an expected judgement and fire which is for God's adversaries, shows that deliberately sinning after salvation causes spiritual death. Their destination is Hell instead of Heaven. This passage seems to link in well with an earlier one in Hebrews.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. Hebrews 6:4-6 (KJV)

Not only can the saved fall away to spiritual death, but they can fall away in such a way as to be beyond recovery! The Hebrews 10 reference could be talking about such irretrievably lost people too, considering that it's in the same book of the Bible and uses some powerful wording. Perhaps some sort of deliberate renouncing or turning away from the Holy Spirit could be referred to there. Maybe it is related to the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which Jesus warned about in Mark 3:28-30.

However, we shouldn't forget that we have plenty of other evidence in the Bible, like the sin and subsequent repentance of David and Peter, that believers can usually repent of their sin. It seems that something more than simple sinning, or 'worse' (so to speak) than denying Jesus, could be meant in the above passages. After all, Peter's example shows that denying Christ can be repented from.

Another point is that just because Hebrews 10 is talking about deliberate sin, it doesn't mean we can ignore unintentional sins. We are to strive to be perfect. We should take

all our sins to God and fight against them. Here is another passage showing that the saved can die.

For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them 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.

2 Peter 2:20-21 (ESV)

Again, this passage certainly seems to start with a description of truly saved people, as they are said to have escaped the world's defilements through Christ. But if they are "overcome" by sin again, it becomes clear they are no longer saved. If they retained their salvation it seems unlikely that it would be described as being worse for these people than never having it. If they later repented though, which this passage doesn't say is impossible, God would welcome them back, just like the person in the story below.

## The Prodigal Son

The story of the "Prodigal Son" also seems to demonstrate that the truly saved may lose their salvation. It is a bit long to reproduce here, but it is told by Jesus in Luke 15:11-32. The prodigal was a son (implying he was God's son, saved in the Lord). He wasn't snatched away from his father, but he did walk away into rebellion and sin. Doing so made him "dead" and "lost". Returning, though, made him alive *again* (not "for the first time").

for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Luke 15:24 (ASV)

## Falling away during testing

In Luke 8:4-15 we can read about Jesus explaining one of His parables. This one was about seeds, representing the word of God, which were sown by a farmer, and what happened to them. We'll just focus here on the part of the parable where some believed but then lost their salvation.

Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture.

Luke 8:6 (NIV)

Jesus went on to explain the meaning of the parable.

Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.

Luke 8:13 (NIV)

People who received the word of life joyfully and who did believe in Christ for a time sound like individuals who found salvation. That didn't stop them from falling away and withering during testing though, which doesn't suggest they kept their salvation.

## Warnings from Galatians

Much of Galatians 5 and 6 warns Christians ("brothers") against indulging the flesh, or sinfulness, and shows that people who do live sinfully will not have eternal life.

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.  
Galatians 5:13 (NASB®)

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.  
Galatians 5:19-21 (ESV)

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.  
Galatians 6:7-9 (NIV)

Remember, these warnings were written to brethren, or fellow believers in the Lord. They are described as being those who will have life eternal and a harvest if they persist. Therefore it seems to be referring to saved people, rather than people who have yet to know God. If this is so, then the fact that they are warned about those who won't inherit the Lord's kingdom, or who won't be saved, in Galatians 5:21 suggests that there is a risk that they may lose a salvation they currently possess.

Thus far...

It's definitely true that saved Christians may fall away from the Lord, to the loss of their salvation. It also seems to be correct to say that they can usually return to Him in repentance, like the prodigal son. The next section has two more examples of people who did fall away from the Lord.

## A Final Example

We have already talked about King David and Adam and Eve, and have briefly mentioned Peter and many of Jesus' other disciples, as examples of real people with their salvation ups and downs. We do have good news at least about David and Peter, as they repented of their sins. Another example of a person who fell away from the Lord is Solomon.

## Solomon

Solomon was one of the kings of Israel. He loved the Lord, and God gave him great wisdom and wealth.

And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.  
1 Kings 3:3 (KJV)

behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."  
1 Kings 3:12-14 (ESV)

The fact that Solomon is described as loving the Lord, and the way God gave him such amazing gifts, certainly implies that Solomon was in God's favour - which is a good description of being in a saved state. David, his father, counselled Solomon to keep following the Lord, telling him that he would know God if he did, and warning him what would happen if he didn't.

"And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.  
1 Chronicles 28:9 (ESV)

Being cast off forever doesn't sound like being headed for an eternity with the Lord. Sadly, even Solomon, the wisest man, did fall away from God in his old age.

For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.  
For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites.  
Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done.  
1 Kings 11:4-6 (NASB®)

God's love for Solomon didn't mean Solomon was prevented from sinning and falling away. Certainly God was there for him, but he walked away from God. Doing evil isn't acceptable to God. Logically, it seems Solomon must have lost his salvation, if our understanding of the verses mentioned earlier in this article is correct. We don't mean to be gloomy by using him as a final illustration, but we don't know of any text in the Bible telling us directly that Solomon repented before he died. We hope he did!

Thus far...

This is just one of the Biblical examples of people who followed the Lord yet fell away. As previously discussed, some people, like David and Peter, did return to Him. Some of them, possibly like Solomon, didn't. We are encouraged in the Bible that we need to remain in the Lord, and that He helps us and protects us if we do.

The final section has points on why this overall topic is important to talk about, and to understand and believe correctly about.

## Why's it Important?

Here are some reasons why the issue of whether a Christian can lose their salvation or not is so important.

### 1. False doctrine

We have seen that many Bible verses teach that saved people can lose their salvation by falling away back into sin or not persevering in the Lord. That means that teachings which deny this possibility are false. The Bible warns very strongly against accepting or teaching false doctrines, even saying they will cause loss of salvation.

Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.  
2 Timothy 2:17-18 (NIV)

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.  
2 Peter 2:1-3 (ESV)

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and

are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!  
Galatians 1:6-9 (NIV)

The above verses aren't necessarily talking about this specific wrong teaching, but they make a point. We can learn from them.

## 2. Weakened personal stance against sin

A believer can be led away from God and into sin by this teaching. If it is possible for a person to be saved despite unrepentant sinning, perhaps just so long as they aren't habitual about it, what reason would they have for becoming free of occasional sin?

This is a genuine question which somebody struggling with sin might consider. It can be tempting to use it as an excuse for continuing in sin, particularly when the sin is a very tough one to beat, when it's a real trap you're in and you feel helpless about how to get out of it. "If I indulge just once a week, then it's ok." If someone in this situation doesn't believe it really matters in their salvation if they just do it infrequently, they have lost a major reason for repenting. But the Bible says such a person is heading towards Hell.

Additionally, how easy would it be for this to spread to feeling secure in any amount of sins? Sin can be enjoyable and hard to get free of. We are also surrounded by a world that loves to indulge in it and doesn't care about turning to righteousness. So why bother repenting, eternally speaking, if you are going to Heaven anyway?

## 3. Weakened church stance against sin

This teaching weakens the church's stance against sin and towards repentance and freedom. If we are correct in thinking that many churches do teach this false doctrine, doesn't it seem likely to contribute to less emphasis on holiness overall? It often seems as though most popular Christian writers believe this wrong teaching.

## 4. We need to tell people

If this false teaching is widespread, as we are led to understand, then we should tell people about how it is wrong. Warning people about sin and error is part of being a Christian. It doesn't mean we are being mean or divisive, it means we are trying to warn people about a deadly problem.

## 5. Where's the doctrine from?

Where does the teaching that sin can't affect a Christian's salvation come from? The Bible doesn't seem to teach it. It *does* teach that believers in Christ have spiritual security. However, it also very frequently shows that this security is for those who stay in Christ. It isn't for those who fall away.

Even Bible verses which focus on the security rather than the need for perseverance don't somehow invalidate the aforementioned teachings. Many passages clearly warn believers about the spiritual danger of being away from God. We should use all of the Bible for our understanding, and be careful not to use things inappropriately out of context or in isolation.

We know of no verse which says in effect, "a Christian can murder unrepentantly and still go to Heaven". We do know of verses which say in effect, "anybody who murders unrepentantly won't go to Heaven".

## 6. But simply

God says we have to teach the truth, so therefore let's try to do so.

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.  
Titus 2:1 (NIV)

## Summing up

The Bible teaches that sin can make you unsaved, whether or not you were previously saved. Sinful believers have to repent and return to the Lord if they are expecting salvation, just as any sinful rejecter of the Lord must. This is greatly in harmony with what the Bible says about repentance. The Christian must live a life of holiness. It isn't just habitual sin we have to watch out for. We can't be saved by our holiness, and we can't be perfectly holy on Earth. But we can reject our sins and become free from them through Jesus, and live a life of repentance in Him. If we don't, then we don't have saving faith.

## Note

We haven't really labelled doctrines in this article. That is a matter of personal preference more than anything, but perhaps it will help prevent people getting turned off or offended. We also don't know enough about the background or theology of the differing terms to pretend we would really know what we were talking about.

However, for the sake of completeness, the teaching that a saved person cannot lose their salvation is sometimes known as unconditional security, once saved always saved, the perseverance of the saints, or a Calvinistic viewpoint. There may be differences between these terms, but for our purposes we understand them to be reasonably equivalent with one another. The belief that a saved person *can* lose their

salvation is sometimes referred to as conditional security or an Arminian or Wesleyan viewpoint.

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