

“Can a Born-Again Christian Remain in a Carnal State?”

If one is truly a born again Christian, can they remain in a carnal state? If they are not willing to grow spiritually, give up those things which are offensive to God are they truly saved? Also much debate about losing one's salvation seems to be a confusing topic for some. It says in God's word that no man can pluck you out of the Father's hand but what if one decides to remove themselves by renouncing their belief in the Lord? God did not remove them, they removed themselves. We have a Bible study in our work place and this seems to be an ongoing problem to give a clear cut answer to. Please could you help me?

Your questions are perceptive and very important for understanding the Christian life. I think it's safe to say that Christians are not effectually sinless people. With that in mind, our righteousness is not ours, but Christ's. Granted, a Christian is a regenerated being. We have the Spirit of God living in us and have the freedom to choose right over wrong. But some people seem to be changed overnight, while others are slower about showing the fruits of new birth. We must trust God to have that under consideration as He works in the life of new or not-so-new believers.

It's important that we look at our lives and the lives of others from a broader perspective than we might be used to. God works throughout our whole lives. When we become Christians we can look back at times before our salvation and see that He was working even then. I think we'll also be able to look back in eternity and see where God was working throughout our whole lives (unsaved and saved), when we weren't even aware of it. To get to the point, living “carnally” does not necessarily invalidate a person's claim to salvation. But at the least it ought to call it into question.

1 John 2:3-6 gives us an effective measure of our relationship to Christ. If we know Him, then we'll act like it. If I'm not finding the desire or the ability to follow Christ's will for my life, then I am forced to ask, "Why not?" I can recount many testimonies of people who truly came to know Christ after being in such a predicament.

A believer's security is a very important issue. For if one can forfeit his inheritance, then how many sins will it take to disqualify him. John 10:27-30 does teach that no one is able to "snatch them out of the Father's hand." Paul says in Romans 8:38-39, "I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." So it seems that no one (not even the person himself) or no thing can take us from God.

Better yet, what if he chooses one day to renounce the faith he once held so dearly? I'm in no place to decide if someone's profession of faith was sincere or not. But we do have the responsibility as brothers and sisters in Christ to challenge each other to bear fruit. If it isn't being seen, then there ought to be someone who can say, "Hey, I'm not seeing any fruit." Philippians 1:6 affirms our hope: "Being confident in this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." So, biblically speaking, salvation is for keeps. The question must be, "Is the person who isn't living for Christ really a Christian at all?" Only God and the person in question can really answer that. Our responsibility as a community of faith is to encourage one another to be true to each other's profession of faith.

I hope this helps you in your search for truth. He rewards those who seek Him.

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