

## “Once Saved, always saved”? Dangerous error.



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*All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Eternal security, once saved always saved, perseverance of the saints, falling away, fall away, depart from the truth, eternal salvation, Hebrews 6:4-6. John 10:28; my sheep hear my voice;*

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**Summary:** *Is it true that once we say the “magic words” of accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior and repent of our sins, that our eternal salvation is forever guaranteed and we can never lose it, no matter what we do afterwards? Is that true? This sermon will debunk that dangerous teaching.*

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Well hello again, everyone. Thank you for inviting me to your group.

**One of longest-lasting doctrinal debates is the controversy about the “once saved, always saved, no matter what” doctrine.** It’s also known as the doctrine of **Eternal Security** or **“Perseverance of the saints”**. All three refer to the “once-saved-always-saved” doctrine. That doctrine teaches that God’s salvation has been guaranteed to believers who have accepted Jesus as their Savior. I believe it’s a dangerous error and you’ll soon see why.

**There are many variations** of the once-saved-always-saved belief, but *generally* most of them believe once saved, **you cannot lose that salvation no matter what you become or do later in life.**

They say you **cannot fall from God’s grace, you cannot fall away, you cannot backslide permanently.** Sounds great. And many - including many of the most recognized preachers on TBN or senior pastors of the big mega-churches —absolutely believe this, that once God gives you salvation – and yes, we have been saved by GRACE and not by works (Eph 2:8-9) – once he gives it, He will never take it away. NO matter what WE do, they say.

Be aware there are various forms of once-saved-always-saved or Eternal Security. Many, many protestants and Catholics and Church of God groups and Hebrew Roots groups totally reject the once-saved-always-saved teaching, and I was glad to learn that. So **let’s not broad-brush all protestants or all believers with this false teaching.**

**Many do believe if they say the magical words** that *they’ve accepted Jesus as their Savior and have repented of their sins, that from that moment onward they are absolutely saved and that salvation cannot ever be revoked, for ANY reasons.*

Is that what YOU believe? Whether or not you do, if you’d like to see what God actually says in his word on this, you’ll get a lot from this teaching today. **Again, this CALVINIST doctrine goes by various names** – Once-saved-always-saved, Eternal Security, Perseverance of the Saints.

**Welcome to you all to Light on the Rock. I’m Philip Shields – minister,** host and founder of Light on the Rock.

There ARE also many Christians who do worry if they will ever “make it” into God’s kingdom, or heaven, or **if they’re good enough, or will qualify for God’s kingdom. I addressed that last time** in my sermon on “God’s righteousness gifted to us by His grace and faith in Jesus”. In my sermon after this one, I hope to cover that in more detail. – that it’s GOD’s righteousness you have now, **and Romans 8:3-4 says the righteous requirements of the law were fulfilled in us by Christ, when we have faith in HIM.**

**My own teaching is that we’re saved by GRACE and by FAITH entirely in Yeshua – IN Jesus.** OUR Fruits of righteousness are by Christ (**Philippians 1:11**). When we branches abide in the Vine, we shall bear much fruit, for without Yeshua/Jesus we can do nothing. (**John 15:4-5**), and if we don’t abide we will likely be gathered up as separated branches and burned.

***The eternal security folks like to say, if you reject the Eternal Security belief, that you’re safe, protected and all done – then you’re relying on your own efforts, not faith in Jesus Christ.***

*Many believers do have these fears and it causes them to lose the “joy of their salvation” that we all should have.*

*I’ll touch on that again next teaching.*

**WHY WE NEED this topic:**

- SO you can debunk the false teaching with the notes and scriptures I’ll give you.
- **So you don’t fall for the idea that ALL we ever need is to mouth the magic words** that we repent of our sins and accept Jesus as our Savior, and then we are forever and eternally saved, no matter what.

But Scripture is explicit that indeed there’s more to it than that. We CAN still lose our salvation and I’ll prove it to you in a few minutes.

- **We’ll USE WHOLE Bible.** I’ll even show you their favorite scriptures as well as many they don’t tend to use. That’s always part of the problem: **both sides tend not to use the whole Bible** and tend to avoid scriptures that seem to prove their viewpoint is false. We must use the WHOLE Bible on all discussions. I’ll show you both sides of the argument.
- We need this teaching right now because the Once-saved-always-saved **teaching *can* and does cause many to *become careless about their spiritual life.*** Why be focused at all on your condition with God if your relationship with God is assured, as they teach.

*People can feel they don’t need to guard their relationship with God, and protect and value the wonderful gifts of his eternal life, God’s own perfection, God’s own righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and so much more. We can take all those for granted.*

***Let’s dive right into it now.***

***WHY the ONCE-SAVED-ALWAYS-SAVED doctrine is SO WRONG***

*Next time I’ll cover more of the things we do AS we follow Christ, but right now, let’s **hop right into this discussion on Eternal security** or the Once-saved-always-saved doctrine. They believe, once saved, once you’ve accepted Jesus and are saved, **that you can do nothing after that to lose your salvation or to be cut off from God or his grace or backslide, or drift permanently away.***

The once-saved-always-saved favorite verse seems to be John 10:28 where the sheep of God’s flock – us – are given eternal life. Let’s evaluate it now.

**John 10:27-30**

**“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**

**28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.**

29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.”

***Sounds very secure, doesn't it? Let's read it carefully now.***

*WHO are these sheep? These are people/sheep who **HEAR God's voice. He knows these sheep. And these sheep follow Christ.** Can someone who has returned to a lifestyle – not slipups – but LIFESTYLE of sin and debauchery, claim to be hearing God's voice? Or that they know him and he knows them? And can they claim to STILL be FOLLOWING HIM (ALL VERSE 27) if they're coming home drunk after a night of sex outside their marriage?*

*Of course not!*

***I DO take great comfort from John 10:27-29 to know that as long as I am one who seeks and hears his voice, and am known by Christ and I follow him, that nobody can snatch me out of his hand. This is a sure promise – but it does not apply to people who are NOT hearing his voice, following him or are known by him. See the difference?***

***John 10:28 ONLY applies to those who also were part of John 10:27—sheep who hear his voice, follow him and know and are known by him.***

***In my last sermon I also gave 5-6 scriptures where Yeshua (Jesus) himself says if we believe in him we have eternal life.***

***BUT let's USE The WHOLE Bible to understand that.***

***Book of Hebrews has a lot to say***

***Let's jump now into the book of Hebrews.***

**The early Hebrew and Jewish converts were heavily persecuted and some began to be tempted to go back to their Judaism and sacrifices. The author of the Book of Hebrews is trying to stave off this very issue. He showed how Yeshua was greater than angels, greater than Moses, greater than Abraham, etc.**

Let's read to whom he writes, as you'll need to remember this in other quotes from Hebrews. **In Heb 13:20-21** he prays that God will make them complete in every good work to do his will, working what is well pleasing in his sight.

SO who is he talking to? Run of the mill folks or deeply converted brethren?

**Hebrews 3:1-2**

**"Therefore, holy BRETHREN, partakers of the heavenly calling,** consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house."

**They are holy, meaning they have the Holy Spirit in them.** That's what makes you and me holy. These readers are partakers of the heavenly calling. As I read these scriptural admonitions to brethren, think: do these **verses make SENSE if the hearers had no fear of ever losing their salvation?** Let's hop to verse 6, to see that we have to hold fast to the END.

**Hebrews 3:6**

**"but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are IF we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope FIRM to the END."**

**"IF" implies things we assumed may not be there at the end if we don't hold fast to the end. This next one shows we CAN drift away and NEGLECT our great salvation, something the Eternal security folks don't teach.**

**Hebrews 2:1-3**

**"Therefore we must give the MORE earnest heed to the things we have heard, LEST we drift away.** [So, we CAN drift away]

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,

3 **how shall WE escape if we NEGLECT so great a salvation,** which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him"

Now comes a biggie. Somehow the Eternal security folks do cartwheels to try to explain this one away in Hebrews 6.

**Hebrews 6:4-6**

“For it is IMPOSSIBLE for those who were **once enlightened**, and have **tasted the heavenly gift**, and **have become partakers of the Holy Spirit**,

5 and have **tasted the good word of God** and the powers of the age to come,

6 ***if THEY FALL AWAY***, to **renew them again** to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.”

**Break that down. “Once enlightened”** – means they received God’s light to pull them out of darkness. Christ is the light of the world. They received that. They came out of darkness. **Look at the scripture again.**

- **V. 4 Tasted heavenly gift and partakers of the Holy Spirit** -- these are people who were formerly deeply converted brethren with God’s Holy Spirit.
- **V. 5** – they TASTED and understood God’s word, which takes God opening their minds to see his truths.
- **V. 6 would not have been written if we could never fall away!** It seems clear to me, yes, formerly deeply spirit-led and converted brethren CAN fall away. What a shame.

**With all the scriptures I gave in the last sermon of God’s righteousness part 2, clearly sometimes we go astray. Jesus comes looking for us (Luke 15:1-7).** Clearly we can walk away from God’s house, as the **Prodigal** did. But when he came to his senses and repented and returned to his Father, he was accepted back with JOY.

**So Hebrews 6 has to be talking about someone who defiantly and *permanently* walks from God**, knowing what he’s doing, and it ***becomes a PERMANENT decision of rebellion.***

So does Hebrews 6:4-6 honestly sound like Once-saved-always-saved to you? Surely it cannot.

**Note again this time in Hebrews 10**, that these people had received the knowledge of the truth. **Sinning “willfully” becomes a big issue.** Probably we all have sinned many times, *knowing* what we were doing was wrong. This is not trying to make anyone worry about their eternity. If you’re ever worried that you’ve done it now, gone too far, and are worried – your very feelings of wondering and worrying show you want back and God WILL have you back.

These are people being referred to **as God's adversaries (v.27b)**. If you still seek God and want God, you are not an adversary! BUT to the case of Eternal Security doctrine, this IS talking about people who received the knowledge of the truth and insulted the Holy Spirit. (v. 27a, 29b)

**Hebrews 10:26-33**

**"For if we willfully AFTER we have received the knowledge of the truth,** there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain **fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation** which will devour the adversaries.

28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, **counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?**

30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people."

**31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

32 But recall the former days in which, **after you were illuminated,** you endured a great struggle with sufferings...."

**EZEKIEL, Peter, Paul**

These early Christians had only what we call the "Old Testament" as their Bible. Look at this next one. It's not how we START, but *how we end up* that counts most. Let's read it:

**Ezekiel 18:24**

**"But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity,** and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live?

**All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered;** because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, **BECAUSE OF them HE SHALL DIE".**

Does that sound like once-saved-always-saved? Hardly. What about this next one from Apostle Peter? Peter clearly speaks of people who have come out of this world's pollutions, have known the way of righteousness (v 21) then return to the evil ways of life before their conversion.

**2 Peter 2:20-22**

"For if, **AFTER they have escaped the pollutions of the world** through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, *they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.*"

**21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment** delivered to them.

**22** But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

Very clear, wouldn't you say?

Here's Paul's statement about HIS OWN seriousness. \*\*

**1 Corinthians 9:26-27**

"Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. **27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.**"

The apostle Paul, who understood all this topic better than all of us, *says even he could yet be disqualified.* That means so can you, and so can I. Hardly the once-saved-always-saved doctrine.

The Eternal security folks say once saved, you cannot fall from grace ever again. Well, Paul wrote to the saints in Galatia, who clearly had received God's spirit (**Gal. 3:2-3**), *that they could still fall from grace.* The context was circumcision, but that doesn't matter. We CAN fall from grace.

**Galatians 5:4**

*"You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have **FALLEN FROM GRACE**."*

Pretty clear, isn't it?

**There are seven churches of Rev 2 and 3.** Almost all are told to repent and overcome. Here's one example that sheds light on this topic, spoken by

Yeshua, Jesus our Messiah. **Notice our names – once written in the book of Life, CAN still be blotted out. Pretty clear.**

**Revelation 3:4-5**

“You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

**5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will NOT BLOT OUT his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”**

There are so many scriptures that do insist that in believing in Jesus, and following what HE is doing in us, we have to persevere in being attached to Christ TO The VERY END.

**So what I have shown so far:**

- We CAN have our names blotted out of the book of Life once it’s there (Rev 3:5).
- **Paul said, if he wasn’t careful, EVEN he could YET be disqualified (1 Cor. 9:27).**
- Peter said it would have been better to not have known the truth than to know it but then return like a dog to his vomit, as we go back to the sinful ways of our past (**2 Pet 2:20-22**).
- God says through **Ezekiel 18:24** that it’s **how we end up at that counts**. If we start out righteously but end up in evil as our way of life, all our righteousness won’t be remembered and we will DIE.
- **Hebrews 10:26-30** – if, once we first received the knowledge of the truth, we go back to a life of willful sinning, that’s it for us! Verse 29 clearly shows these were believers who had been sanctified – declared holy – by the blood of the covenant and insulted the spirit of grace by their conduct.
- There are many more I’ve shown, but let’s read again Heb 6:4-6 that shows people **who came into God’s light, tasted and became partakers of the Holy Spirit, if THEY fall away, that’s it**. Now this HAS to be referring to those who permanently leave God and won’t come back as the prodigal son did. But clearly God’s chosen CAN still FALL AWAY.

**Hebrews 6:4-6**

“For it is IMPOSSIBLE for those who were **once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,**

5 and have **tasted the good word of God** and the powers of the age to come,

6 ***if THEY fall away, to renew them again*** to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.”

Sure doesn't sound like once-saved-always-saved, does it? Hebrews 6 is about people who make a permanent decision to spit in God's face, reject his holy promises and refuse to repent.

**This includes those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit.** Jesus said that doing that also is grounds for committing what he calls the unpardonable sin. Does that sound like Eternal Security? Jesus says in those instances, it's eternal condemnation!

**Mark 3:28-30**

"Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter;

29 **BUT he who blasphemes *against the Holy Spirit* NEVER has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation" –**

30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Now let's go back to what Jesus said to all of us. My security is in abiding in Christ, staying connected to HIM, NOT in assuming that after being saved or accepting Jesus as my Savior, that I can do whatever I want after that. As long as I abide in my Savior, I have security!

Let's read his words carefully, especially the consequences of NOT abiding in Yeshua FOR Those WHO STARTED with Him, but did not END with him.

**John 15:4-7**

**“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**

5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; ***for without Me you can do NOTHING.***

**6 If anyone DOES NOT ABIDE in Me, he is CAST OUT as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”**

Surely, I have shown without a doubt, that yes – we can start with Christ, we can start being enlightened and in his LIGHT, we can receive the Holy Spirit and God’s grace and favor – and STILL fall away, STILL fall from Grace, STILL end up in the lake of fire if we make a permanent decision to walk away.

**HAVE BEEN SAVED, BEING SAVED, SHALL BE SAVED**

**Ephesians 2:8** says *we have been* saved. But there are also strong scriptures that say that salvation is final when we’re still there still at the very end. Eternal Security folks don’t normally like to use the verses that say we SHALL BE saved if we’re there at the end.

***But being there at the very end, still faithful, is not our doing, but Christ working in us. It’s always Jesus’ doing, not yours. It’s always faith in HIM, rather than faith in what we do. HE will see us there to the end if we believe in him and seek HIM.***

**Other scriptures that say we *have been saved*, already, right now: Ephesians 2:5,8; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5; Romans 8:24; Acts 16:31.**

**God can say we ‘have been saved’ because of his intentions to not let you go so easily once you’re one of his flock – as John 10:28-30 says clearly. He sees the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10).**

**There are also numerous scriptures saying we are BEING saved. We’re in the process. God fully intends to get us there, but ... BUT he also allows us free moral agency; free CHOICE. We CAN still mess things up if we don’t abide in him to the very end.**

***ARE BEING saved: Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15***

**And scriptures that say if we endure to the end we shall be saved. Eternal security folks don’t often quote these because there’s a BIG “IF” IN The LANGUAGE. Those who endure, IF we endure, to the end shall be saved (Matthew 24:13).**

***SHALL BE saved IF we endure to the end and are faithful -- Mark 13:13; Romans 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:15; if we hold fast- 1 Corinthians 15:2. Rev. 17:14 – “called, chosen, faithful”***

**God sees the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10), but we have to be there at the end.**

**There are so many dozens and dozens of other scriptures that flat out say or imply we can lose our salvation if we don't GUARD IT AS PRECIOUS. Here are a FEW OUT OF DOZENS POSSIBLE:**

**Notice in this next one, we CAN wander from the truth. So at one point we had truth, and wandered.**

**James 5:19-20**

**Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins".**

**The book of Romans was written to the SAINTS in Rome. Ch 1:6?**

**Romans 8:12-13**

**"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.**

**13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."**

**(apparently though once saved, we could still perish if we decide to go back to living in the flesh)**

**One of the best selling points of the once-saved-always-saved teaching is that we never have to be concerned ever again about our future. Look at these next several verses.**

**1 Corinthians 10:12**

**"Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."**

**1 Peter 4:17-18**

**"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?**

**18 Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"**

***The teaching is that we can never depart from the faith once we accept Jesus/Yeshua as Savior by faith.***

**1 Timothy 4:1-2**

***"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some WILL DEPART from the FAITH, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.."***

***Remember John 10:27-28 that Yeshua's sheep follow him and he KNOWS them, and they hear his voice? How does this sound?***

**Matthew 7:21-23**

**21 "NOT everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.**

**22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'**

**23 And then I will declare to them, 'I NEVER KNEW YOU, DEPART from me, you who practice lawlessness!'**

***Study the contexts of all of these verses. I'm just hitting the most pressing points. This next one: I thought our calling was already sure, per ETERNAL SECURITY doctrine. Peter didn't assume so.***

**2 Peter 1:10-11**

***"Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE, for if you do these things you will never stumble;"***

***Do you claim to be IN Christ and to know him? Only if we continue to walk as he walked.***

**1 John 2:3-6**

***"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.***

***4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.***

***5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.***

***6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”***

***There’s also the strict warning about being branches that are torn off. And ... here’s the point – that after conversion, if we don’t watch our relationship carefully, we can still be torn off.***

***Romans 11:19-24***

19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear.

***21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either.***

***22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, IF you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.***

***23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.***

***24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?”***

***In this next passage, I’m addressing the notion that once saved, always saved and EVEN if you go back to a life of terrible sin, you’re still saved (they say, not me) and cannot lose out on the kingdom of God. Let’s see what Paul says.***

***So YES, after being saved by God by grace and Faith in Jesus Christ, if you go back like a dog to the vomit and back to a life of sin, you WILL NOT BE IN the kingdom of God.***

***Galatians 5:19-21***

***“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions,***

dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like;

***of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that Those WHO PRACTICE SUCH THINGS WILL NOT INHERIT the kingdom of God.”***

***And remember Ezekiel 18;24 – that it is how we end up that counts most? We have to ENDURE to the end to be saved. There’s no assumption that you’re all done without having to endure. So I hope you who believe in once saved always saved, are coming to the light on this and realize it is a very false and dangerous doctrine.***

**Mark 13:13**

***“And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the END SHALL BE saved.”***

***ONE MORE.... Notice the wording carefully.***

**1 Corinthians 15:1-2**

***“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,***

***2 by which also you are saved, IF you hold fast that word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain.”***

***Next time, I’ll talk about how we MUST BE LIVING IN Christ AND LETTING HIM LIVE IN US – for us to be there at the very end. It’s all Yeshua (Jesus) doing, his working his life in us and we follow him. It’s 100% Jesus’ work, as we believe in him and follow him. Much more on that next time.***

***In the meantime, don’t ever lose your first love, or get lax about sin and shortcomings you have in your walk as a believer – whether in your marriage, or day to day activities or whatever. We remain steadfast and follow Jesus’ lead. We resist sin and follow our Master Jesus.***

***Til next time.....***