

General Topics :: Unassurance

Unassurance - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/9 15:58

I haven't seen anything about unassurance in the forums and wanted to see if anyone wanted to have a discussion about it.

My belief is that if I am willfully sinning against God then at that time I am in unbelief. I may have the knowledge about who and what God is and although my lack of faith does not hinder God being faithful to Himself I remain in doubt and disbelief by the very act of willfully sinning. At that time it is as if I am pretending there is no God and that He is not Lord or Saviour or anything else that He is. I am completely opposing Jesus during willful sin and by not having faith in Him at that time means I am not believing Him but I am disbelieving Him and utterly opposed to Him. At the time of willful sin I cannot at that time believe the gospel as the power that saved me or the power that is saving me or any other power from above for me. I cannot believe He is my Savior and I cannot believe He is my Lord. I am believing a deception by faith and that is the lie that I am a child of sin and can do nothing but sin. My conscious can only show me that I am meant for hell fire. Anyone who can willfully sin and while willfully sinning take comfort in the gospel is sadly mistaken. What he believes to be faith is only head knowledge and is just religious babblings in his head that have no meaning. This person has deceived himself.

This scenario of being in willful sin is what I believe is the only rightful place for unassurance. It's man in His faithless state utterly incapable of having faith in God as the power that saved Him.

Re: Unassurance, on: 2005/5/9 20:57

wow, this is really "unusual". Sir, to my knowledge, all sin is willful sin. I have to know it is sin and do it anyway for it to be sin. If I do something that I'm not aware is sin, can that be charged to me?

If all sin is willful sin, as I believe it is, then you are sayingwhat? I'm no longer sure. Maybe you simply and elaborate. ;-)

Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2005/5/10 0:09

bro. Lahry. In what sense do you use sin? How do you understand sin in light of all sin being willful sin?

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/10 7:18

All sin is willful sin. I had to say willful sin for people to wrap their corrupt minds around so they know that when we sin it is willful. The modern day churchdom has this idea that we accidentally sin. I believe this is a big problem. I am asking us Christians to see what it is we are doing when we sin. When we sin we are not having faith in God. It is as simple as that. To believe you can rightfully comfort your mind with a pet Christian doctrine while sinning is to deceive yourself.

It's actually comforting to have a response like this. In my church any talk or perspective along the lines of repentance is seen as legalism or unassurance of salvation.

When someone mentions their addiction to cigarettes or a problem with porn it's usually counterattacked by a minister with the approach, "It's hard I know, but don't worry brother just pray." Instead of attacking the seriousness of sin and telling them to repent they pat them on the back and say, "brother whatever you do just know you're still a brother in Christ you're saved, you can't lose your salvation don't ever forget that."

Jesus believed He was Lord and Saviour when he said, "go and sin no more" so why don't we tell our brothers and sisters in Christ that. We in the church have used our Christian doctrines to extract the power of the gospel out of our speech and lives. No wonder we have a half dead unfruitful church in America.

When a brother sins 3 times in a row the other brothers on the 3rd confrontation are supposed to be like hey Johnny you're not acting like a Brother and in fact you keep on doing what isn't Christian behaviour right here in our fellowship. Why don't you go out into the world and live how you want until at such a time you decide serving the Lord is what you want to do and then come back and there will be true fellowship. The early church would actually encourage false believers to go back out into the world if it was obvious they weren't for real. They wouldn't pat them on the back and reinforce their

behaviour with Christian doctrine.

I picture someone in the modern day church saying something like, "I went to the bar the other day and got wasted, man what a mess. I shouldn't have done that." It seems more biblical to ask the person if he enjoys the club scene over Christian living then to ask him, Why don't you just leave the church and just do that instead?

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/5/10 7:24

Quote:
-----wow, this is really "unusual". Sir, to my knowledge, all sin is willful sin. I have to know it is sin and do it anyway for it to be sin. If I do something that I'm not aware is sin, can that be charged to me?

A distinction might be made between 'transgression' and 'sin', although this will disturb some folk. There is a difference between Eve's act and Adam's. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." (1Tim. 2:14, KJVS) Eve's transgression might be compared with what the KJV calls 'sins of ignorance' (Lev 4) 'though the NASB calls them 'unintentional sins' which gives a better idea of the topic. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If a person sins unintentionally in any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and commits any of them, (Lev 4:1-2 NASB)

Re: for Doz, on: 2005/5/10 7:51

This is my understanding of sin. Sin is willful breaking a law of God. As our brother Ron so graciously pointed out, there is also unintentional sin as well.

The problem with the mindset of many in this hour is that their Christian walk consists entirely of attempting to avoid wrong doing. That is in my opinion religious and is filthy rags to God.

When a person is truly born again, that is they repent, identify with Jesus and His death on the Cross, burial, and resurrection, and place all their eternal hope for eternal life entirely and completely on that finished work, in God's eyes, the flesh dies.

Paul plainly tells us in Eph. 2 that we have already been seated with Christ in heavenly places. It's past tense. How can it be, if we are not already dead in God's eyes. Paul said that if we have been crucified with Christ, then we shall also reign with Him.

To my very limited understanding, and I will take on all flak without retaliation for saying this, When a person becomes born again, the flesh and spirit are forever divided, as long as their faith and eternal hope is in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Our perception of flesh and spirit in one view is that the two are homogenized, while we are certain that the two are separate in another view and opposed to each other. The latter is the view, I believe that God has. He sees us already crucified. That means that we died with Christ, once and for all as He died once and for all.

If the Spirit and the flesh are indeed separate from one another, though both continue to reside within the same container, then their works are separate also. The works of one are destined for the grave. The works of the other are reward stored up for that great and terrible day. The works of the flesh are dead works. Sinful? Completely corrupt and sinful. But the flesh is dead and buried. That's why we have already been passed from judgement into life...eternal life, abundant life...His life. When? The hour we first believed and repented. Oh alleluia. Brother, that's the good news of the Gospel as I understand it. If you feel I'm in left field somewhere, please pray for me. My eternal hope is resting on what I've written here. I sure don't want to miss it. Nor do I want you to miss it either.

Re: Unassurance - posted by dann (), on: 2005/5/10 12:34

Quote:
----- Anyone who can willfully sin and while willfully sinning take comfort in the gospel is sadly mistaken

Remember how Peter willfully sinned at Antioch by separating himself from the gentiles? Paul had to rebuke him for putting a burden on the gentiles that God never intended.

Are you suggesting that Peter only had a head knowledge of the gospel?

There is grand difference between knowing that the gospel is true (head knowledge) and actually placing your own faith in Jesus Christ - the one is a lip service faith - spoken of by James as a "dead faith" - the other a living faith.

But even the apostle Peter was not perfectly sanctified the moment he was saved. I wouldn't want some little one to stumble on account of your zeal.

Dan
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Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2005/5/10 13:08

Quote:
-----Eve's transgression might be compared with what the KJV calls 'sins of ignorance' (Lev 4) 'though the NASB calls them 'unintentional sins' which gives a better idea of the topic

This is a topic that I heard preached just this week and wondered at what is truly meant by 'willful' sin. Based upon what Bro. Ron has written it seems as though there are varying degrees of sin(s) based upon 'knowledge.' If Eve was 'deceived' it means that the enemy had caused her to question the information that was passed to her by Adam to the place where she believed what was *not* true. Sin itself is deceitful and hardens the sinner into a course of life believing untruths.

When we say that one has sinned 'unintentionally' are we saying that the person was deceived into believing that the behavior was either OK or not as it really is; or are we saying that the sinner was *totally* ignorant of the commandment? The enemy is forever deceiving folk into believing that sin is not sin or will not bring the punishment that God has said it will.

It would be the height of rebellion to attempt to Sin against God in a deliberate way. here I am drawing a distinction between what is happening in the 'deceived' persons heart and the 'undeceived.' The one sinned to gratify himself in an unlawful way- the willful sinner sinned highhandedly as if to commit the sin against God to His hurt. One is an act of self indulgence- the other is one of open faced malice against God.

Does this all jibe?

God Bless,

-Robert

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/10 13:36

I would say if Peter was doubting the faith he claimed to have and was separating himself from the gentiles because he doubted then he was sinning. He was being a hypocrite. At that point in time since he was a Christian he may have been asking the question why am I doing the very thing I don't want to do. I know better but here I am being a hypocrite. That's where I think this verse below would apply to his situation:

Rom 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Rom 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

If Paul said he was a wretched body of death we certainly could follow his example whenever we are in sin and admit to God what we are at the time God calls us to repent instead of making justifying statements to appease the conscious su

ch as "I messed up" and "all christians mess up" and "God doesn't expect me to be perfect". If we never admit to being utterly wretched in our sinful choice then we haven't truly come to the end of the wretched man to live by the Spirit but we will try to improve upon our wretched state.

I submit to you that the "little ones" will not stumble if we preach "be holy as I am holy" Instead if we wretched sinners described in the verses above would admit more often to being wretched when we sin and turn from deception and have faith in He who has made us Holy we would be settled in our mind. The sooner they admit to being a wretched sinner the quicker they will be loosed from the perfectionist legalistic yoke that this discussion tends to evoke in ones mind due to the mentality of todays seeker friendly mindset.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/5/11 11:13

Quote:
-----Remember how Peter willfully sinned at Antioch by separating himself from the gentiles? Paul had to rebuke him for putting a burden on the gentiles that God never intended.

I wonder if this was 'sin' as we are defining it in this thread. It was certainly wrong and needed to be corrected but would that make it a 'sin'? Was it not a mistake or a misunderstanding? My rule of thumb understanding of 'sin' is that it is a clash of wills and hence a conscious thing. Paul, describing the incident says that Peter was 'to be blamed' and brings a charge of 'hypocrisy' or 'dissimulation'. The Greek word 'hypercrisis' means, among other things, someone who plays a part in an outward show ie an actor. I am not sure that Paul is accusing Peter of 'sin' in this context.

'to be blamed' is also 'key' as we are talking about Adam's sin in another thread. 'to be blamed' or 'to be charged with' is a word used 3 times in the NT. "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (Gal. 2:11; 1John 3:20-21, KJVS) These 1 John references are usually taken to imply that if our heart brings a charge against us we can ignore it because God is greater than our heart. The verse is often used in this way with those who are 'unassured'. (to use the language of this thread)

I am not sure that this is how we should understand this verse. Part of my reasoning is that 'our heart' is generally an ally rather than an adversary in post-Pentecost bible teaching. Why would the heart bring a testimony contrary to that of God Himself? There is such a strong sense of assurance through so much of 1 John I can't think why 'our heart' should suddenly bring this rogue charge; if that is what it is.

I would suggest another interpretation which would suggest that John is not discounting the testimony of the heart but saying that God's fuller knowledge would bring the same testimony. If our heart brings a charge against us we should take note of it because God's charge would be founded on even more solid evidence; God knowing all things.

I think this understanding, which will be difficult to swallow for most folk seeing it is the exact opposite of what is usually seen in these verses, is more consistent with the following verses where the fact that our heart is not bringing a charge against us gives us confidence in our approach to God. There is a factual pattern in 1 John which goes right against the customary interpretation along the lines of "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1John 3:7-8, KJVS) I think that, throughout this letter, John is encouraging us to listen to our heart rather than to discount its testimony.

wkip

Re: - posted by dann (), on: 2005/5/11 12:05

Quote:
-----It was certainly wrong and needed to be corrected but would that make it a 'sin'? Was it not a mistake or a misunderstanding? My rule of thumb understanding of 'sin' is that it is a clash of wills and hence a conscious thing

One 'rule of thumb' I use is that if we know to do good, and fail to do it - that makes whatever we do sin.

On the strength of that premise I presume that Peter was in the transgression. I am assuming of course that Peter was not confused or ignorant in his transgression.

Dan
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Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2005/5/11 12:47

Hi guys,

My take on what Peter had done stems from what James called having "respect of persons." If we do so we commit sin and are convicted of the law as a transgressor. It seems that what Peter had done closely resembles the preference that one would be given if they had worn "a gold ring or goodly apparel"- in that they are 'Jews'. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* The way in which it ruffled Paul and how he responded suggests that Peter should have known better. It seems very close to a rebuke as I have read and pondered these passages.

Even more striking is that he did not say "stand thou there or sit here under my footstool"- but completely withdrew from the Gentiles. Others who would have stood their ground as to the truth of the Gospel were also carried off. Barnabas seemed to know it was wrong- but was carried off with the dissimulation. I see this as peer pressure induced prejudice. Paul stated before his feeling, "*whosoever they were it maketh no matter to me, God respecteth no mans person*". Peter saw the sheet and heard the voice. God Himself told Peter that the Gentiles were cleansed in Christ. What higher authority did he need?

Clearly what God had cleansed Peter was trying to call 'common' through his actions. God had repeatedly told him not to do that. Peter was not too quick to part with Judaism on this issue.

Another point is that he was compelling the Gentiles to live as do the Jews;

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

The second count of transgression would be in that he was in some way "building again the things that had been destroyed." Here Paul writes:

For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

The third count is that as an Apostle his actions were such that it was 'compelling' the Gentiles to live as do the Jews when he himself did not live as the Jews. We also read:

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Perhaps Peter did not think through the ramifications of what was happening, but the more Paul talks the worse it looks. He reaches the finality of his argument by showing that at the end of the day the message that was being sent was ... *then Christ is dead in vain.*

Surely it was serious error. Would it be sin for me to act in an unloving way to a Jew? or to withdraw fellowship simply because they were Jews or slaves or white or black or any such thing. Was it sin for *him*? If it was not it would only be because it was an act performed in ignorance. If it was done in full light it was sin whether he were an Apostle or not. It certainly was not love.

God Bless,

-Robert

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/5/11 14:13

Quote:
-----Peter saw the sheet and heard the voice. God Himself told Peter that the Gentiles were cleansed in Christ. What higher authority did he need?

You certainly make a good case. It just that I know how long it takes for a genuine paradigm shift to percolate through the whole of a person's thinking. My instinct, right or wrong, is always to see the struggles of the early saints in the best possible light.

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/11 15:26

I came to a conclusion today that this assurance issue is something people settle in their minds early on.

There are those who fail to meet the holy standard that is written in the bible and therefore allow for sin. Then there are those who give up allowing for sin and admit they can do nothing but sin and look to Jesus. Anyone have some good verses to make this point?

Zac explains what we should do well:

4. Holiness comes by looking unto Jesus

"Let us run the race....looking unto Jesus" (Heb.12:1,2).

The secret of godliness is found in the Person of Christ Who came in our flesh (as 1 Tim.3:16 makes very clear) - and not in the doctrine that Christ came in our flesh. It is through His Person and not through a doctrinal analysis of His flesh, that we become holy.

Any amount of self-effort will never make a sinful heart holy. God has to do a work within us, for that to happen.

Holiness (eternal life) is God's gift - and it can never be attained by works (Rom.6:23). The Bible states that God alone can sanctify us (make us holy) entirely (1 Thess.5:23 says that so plainly that no-one can mistake it). Yet multitudes of believers are struggling to deny themselves in order to be holy. They become Pharisees instead.

"The holiness which is no illusion" (Eph.4:24-Philips) is attained by faith in Jesus - in other words by "looking unto Jesus".

If we keep looking only at a doctrine we will become Pharisees. The purer our doctrine, the greater the Pharisees we will become.

The greatest Pharisees I have met on earth were among those who preached the highest standards of holiness through self-effort!! We have to be careful that we don't end up as one of them!

What it means to look unto Jesus is very clearly explained in Hebrews 12:2. First of all we are to look at Him as One Who lived on earth "enduring His cross" daily - "tempted in all points as we are and yet without sin" (Heb.4:15). He is our Forerunner (Heb.6:20), in Whose footsteps we are to run. Secondly, we are to see Him as the One Who is now "at the right hand of the Father", interceding for us and ready to help us in every trial and temptation.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2005/5/11 15:39

Quote:
-----It just that I know how long it takes for a genuine paradigm shift to percolate through the whole of a person's thinking. My instinct, right or wrong, is always to see the struggles of the early saints in the best possible light.

I totally agree. I pray God have mercy on us all. Maybe I look at a guy like Peter and think- if God brought Him through with all his shortcomings He will bring me through also. I think the Apostles were men of like passions as we are. One thing that stands out to me about the OT Saints is that they did not live perfect lives. Yet there was something that kept them living by faith and in favor with God. They kept on pressing and sometimes they made serious mistakes *near the end* of their lives. David was very much in love with God as a young man and yet he failed God as life went on. I think there is more to the soteriological equation than we think. I don't think I have placed enough emphasis on 'faith' and have bought too far in to the Finney doctrine. I think Abraham My Friend showed me that more than anything I ever read.

God Bless,

-Robert

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/5/11 17:26

Hey everyone, I've really enjoyed the progress of this thread. There was a terrific attitude of sharing and listening that led to a very edifying conclusion.

Thanks!

MC

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/12 10:34

Hey MC,

I'm glad you approve of how it's going. I really enjoy your input so it's good to have some confirmation that the Spirit is right.

I had some more thoughts today about this unassurance idea. When we are in sin we are believing in subjective ideas and have subjective experiences. We create a delusion in our mind that is so far outside of Christ as to not be in Him at all. Our minds have no other choice but to believe in a false reality, therefore the reason why we are unassured. It follows a natural law. Sin is not holy like God is. Therefore when we perceive sin as an objective reality we will have a false subjective experience which will put our minds outside of Christ when in reality we are still in Him according to the objective facts about God in His word.

So true repentance must come to see and have faith in the objective realities of who all God is from His word. "Clean hands and a pure heart without which no man may see God." "Blessed are the pure and heart for they shall see God"

Re: Some thoughts on assurance - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/5/12 13:05

Quote:
-----I had some more thoughts today about this unassurance idea. When we are in sin we are believing in subjective ideas and have subjective experiences. We create a delusion in our mind that is so far outside of Christ as to not be in Him at all. Our minds have no other choice but to believe in a false reality, therefore the reason why we are unassured...So true repentance must come to see and have faith in the objective realities of who all God is from His word. "Clean hands and a pure heart without which no man may see God." "Blessed are the pure and heart for they shall see God"

I'd like to run a little with the direction you turned here. There are two ways I understand the word "assurance." The first meaning is our confidence or belief while the second meaning is to refer to Christ's warranty or fidelity. So, in a way, assurance can refer to something both subjective and objective. The problem with sin is that it hinders and even prevents our ability to hold onto the objective facts in Christ, leaving us with our shifting subjective confidence.

This deluded unChristlike mind is the chief problem with sin. While sin destroys lives through its harvested consequences, its real danger to us is that it grieves God and hardens our heart against repentance that leads to the abiding fellowship with His Spirit. We cannot expect to see God with our eyes on the world. I think the inevitable result of this lack of "sight" is lack of assurance. I think your statement "We create a delusion (through sin) in our mind that is so far outside of Christ as to not be in Him at all" refers to this experience.

While we exhort people to repent, deep down I feel true repentance is a precious gift from God. It involves having our eyes opened to not only our miserable condition but the holiness of God. "I have heard of You with my ears; But now my eye sees You; I abhor myself, and I repent in dust and ashes." It is the most awful mistake we can make to waste this gift. Still, can we agree that our stubborn delusions and blindness alter our subjective perception of reality, not the reality of Christ himself?

Our thirst for assurance can not be satisfied with a cocktail of fact and feeling. We need to drink from "Jacob's well", the promise given to Abraham. In light of God's promises I feel it is misguided to measure our factual assurance according to the state of our own conscience. Though we must strive through fire and water to keep a pure conscience, our purest conscience can't ever be the source of our assurance or warranty from Christ. (I am not saying that we should soothe a troubled conscience with cheap grace...a troubled conscience is precious grace for repentance!)

There are people who say that if you are truly saved then the Holy Spirit will tell you and prove it to you. I think this is equivocating on that which must be unequivocal. There are many realities of the gospel that are beyond "knowing" as such but they remain reality. For instance, what does it feel like to be seated with Christ in heavenly places? If we are waiting on Christ to assure us that we are assured that we will have a hard time entering into His rest. Not because He will never save us, but because he already has and therefore our inability to rest is based on some other search for self-validation.

I like how Watchman Nee discusses assurance so brilliantly in *Normal Christian Life*...the chapter titled "Reckoning." I can not think of a more sound book to suggest on this subject.

"Let us remember again that we are dealing here not with promises but with facts. The promises of God are revealed to us by His Spirit that we may lay hold of them; but facts are facts and they remain facts whether we believe them or not. If we do not believe the facts of the Cross they still remain as real as ever, but they are valueless to us.

"We walk by faith, not by appearance" (2 Cor. 5:7), mg). You probably know the illustration of Fact, Faith and Experience walking along the top of a wall. Fact walked steadily on, turning neither to right nor left and never looking behind. Faith followed and all went well so long as he kept his eyes focused upon Fact; but as soon as he became concerned about Experience and turned to see how he was getting on, he lost his balance and tumbled off the wall, and poor old Experience fell down after him.

All temptation is primarily to look within; to take our eyes off the Lord and to take account of appearances.

So in our walk with the Lord our attention must be fixed on Christ. "Abide in me, and I in you" is the Divine order. Faith in the objective facts make those facts true subjectively. As the apostle Paul puts it, "We all ... beholding ... the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image" (2 Cor. 3:18 mg.). The same principle holds good in the matter of fruitfulness of life: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit" (John 15:5). We do not try to produce fruit or concentrate upon the fruit produced. Our business is to look away to Him. As we do so He undertakes to fulfill His Word in us.

How do we abide? 'Of God are ye in Christ Jesus.' It was the work of God to put you there and He has done it. Now stay there! Do not be moved back onto your own ground. Never look at yourself as though you were not in Christ. Look at Christ and see yourself in Him. Abide in Him. Rest in the fact that God has put you in His Son, and live in the expectation that He will complete His work in you. It is for Him to make good the glorious promise that "sin shall not have dominion over

er you" (Rom. 6:14)."

MC

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/5/12 14:27

I'm sorry to be the one to drop the pebble into this little pool of sweet accord...

I have been much blessed my Watchman Nee over many years but I have some questions about this part of his teaching. Here is a quotation from Tozer In the late 1950s, A. W. Tozer wrote about what he called "the error of textualism," which has its counter-part in today's "wordism." This is what he said:

"The error of textualism is not doctrinal. It is far more subtle than that and much more difficult to discover, but its effects are just as deadly. Not its theological beliefs are at fault, but its assumptions.

"It assumes, for instance, that if we have the word for a thing we have the thing itself. If it is in the Bible, it is in us. If we have the doctrine, we have the experience. If something was true of Paul it is of necessity true of us because we accept Paul's epistles as divinely inspired.

"The Bible tells us how to be saved, but textualism goes on to make it tell us that we are saved, something which in the very nature of things it cannot do. Assurance of individual salvation is thus no more than a logical conclusion drawn from doctrinal premises, and the resultant experience wholly mental." (Man: The Dwelling Place of God, A. W. Tozer, page 18, copyright 1966 Christian Publications, Inc., Harrisburg, PA.) Tozer objected to the way that in place of 'the witness of the Spirit' modern evangelicals (I mean 50 years ago!!) were substituting 'logical deductions drawn from proof texts'.

I think this problem is latent in Watchman Nee's teaching on 'reckoning'. It is too easy for someone to be 'reckoning' on something that they don't have in the bank. If it's not there reckoning it is will get be into all kinds of financial trouble. If it is there, then 'reckoning' is a good policy.

The people who are being encouraged to 'reckon' in Romans 6:11 are the people who in the earlier verses actually 'know' something. They have not been persuaded by someone counselling them for 'lack of assurance' but they 'know'. This knowing puts us back into the centre of 1 John where knowing is so crucial. I note the point at which John says 'we know that we know'.

This is not to rubbish Watchmen Nee but just to sound a caution lest we drift back into 'textualism'.

Re: Plop! - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/5/12 14:57

Quote:

-----I'm sorry to be the one to drop the pebble into this little pool of sweet accord...

LOL. Your ripples are welcome!

Quote:

-----This is not to rubbish Watchmen Nee but just to sound a caution lest we drift back into 'textualism'.

Your caution is welcome. The assurances of scripture may be like the mortar that holds my bricks in place. If I have no building blocks of experience then I can't build my house with just the mortar. (or insert a better analogy here at your pleasure!)

I guess assurance is a bird that needs two wings to fly. I suppose I will always hold scriptural revelation and spiritual experience in tension with one another...never dismissing either. I haven't figured how to lean wholly on one while disregarding the other. (Remember our earliest conversations where I asserted that "we've become too didactic"? Look at me now!)

Come to think of it, resolving this tension has been one of my little ongoing preoccupations ever since I have been a Christian. Looking back I see it as a fine line that I've only managed to walk by zig zagging back and forth across it.

In stressing my point I think I zagged abit and I thank you for your zig!

MC

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/12 15:43

I agree with you MC. Your conclusions would take a lot longer for me to get to but I have a similar perspective as you. I pretty much agree with everything you say. It helps to read what I know written out all nice and understandable.

Quote:

-----sound a caution lest we drift back into 'textualism'.

Ron you are right in what you say. In my experience I have avoided textualism so far by denying self and beleiving by faith (Trust in, rely upon, cling too) the person of Jesus and His grace and mercy. Jesus both God and Man is powerful to change a life but doctrine and text is just men jangling their religious chains around for other people to hear.

Re: The way to assurance - posted by ReceivedText, on: 2005/5/12 16:45

I followed through this thread and really think this is a great issue to discuss. Praise the Lord for this discussion.

I really would like to add a hearty "amen" to what philologos just wrote. I think Tozer was right on:

Quote:

-----"It assumes, for instance, that if we have the word for a thing we have the thing itself. If it is in the Bible, it is in us. If we have the doctrine, we have the experience. If something was true of Paul it is of necessity true of us because we accept Paul's epistles as divinely inspired.

"The Bible tells us how to be saved, but textualism goes on to make it tell us that we are saved, something which in the very nature of things it cannot do. Assurance of individual salvation is thus no more than a logical conclusion drawn from doctrinal premises, and the resultant experience wholly mental." (Man: The Dwelling Place of God, A. W. Tozer, page 18, copyright 1966 Christian Publications, Inc., Harrisburg, PA.)

We must not think that when our sins are forgiven that the balance is magically tipped back into our favor and we are pardoned based upon our mental assent and assurance. Freedom from sin is based upon presumption necessarily. But not unfounded presumption. It is an experiential, testable assurance.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reborn?" - 2 Corinthians 13:5

Notice that personal salvation is provable and able to be examined by the believer. Notice also that the proof is based upon whether the Spirit of Jesus Christ dwells in us. If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

So we see that true saving faith produces something real and tangible (in the broad sense of the word).

- 1) Sins are only forgiven those who are "in Christ" - dead to sin, alive to God
- 2) No one "in Christ" has sin imputed, nor can have sin imputed except they be cut off from Christ. (Since in Christ is no sin)
- 3) The sure and most reliable means to having assurance of forgiveness of sins is that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us.

"And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." - 1 John 3:24b

"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." - 1 John 4:13

According to the Scriptures above, we know that we are "in Christ" by the Spirit He has given to us. And we know that there is no condemnation for us who are "in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1)

So the question is, how do you know that you have the Spirit in you? One of the best ways of knowing is our fellowship with Christ in the Spirit.

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." - 1 John 1:7

I believe that this "fellowship one with another" is between us and Christ through His Spirit. And we don't have to worry about knowing if the Spirit we have is of Christ when we realize that all fellowship with Him is in the light. If we are striving to keep our sins or transgressions in darkness, the Spirit of God will convict us with godly fear and demand that we expose them to the light of God and run to Christ for cleansing.

Well, praise the name of our sweet, precious Jesus for His unspeakable gift!

Bless you all,

RT

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/13 9:24

Still growing and trying to see this issue met out in my mind so as to go in what really is the truth day to day. Yesterday I found myself in willful sin. All sin is willful so to even say willful is ridiculous to me but if I didn't I think some people would not understand.

Now I "1Jo 1:9 If we confess our sins," right after but I still am discovering what it is when it says: "he is faithful and just to forgive us sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The discovery is that He is the Jesus that by mercy of Him being Savior has forgiven our sins and by the grace of His Lordship has cleansed us from all unrighteousness. When we confess our sins we should be accepting of both of these promises not just one or the other. By accepting one and not the other we are unrepentant as well as believing in a Jesus that doesn't exist. We are also building from the flesh our own righteousnesses. Then we start stacking righteous acts upon righteous acts like we are building some man made tower to heaven. Then we see our folly and the Lord stomps our tower down to dust. I'm trying to settle this issue once and for all so that I'm no longer building anymore towers to heaven.

Not believing in the power of His grace all these years has caused me to have an extreme wavering in my confidence in Him. I will battle doubt as my flesh tries to get me to not rely upon Him as Lord and so I will want to complete in the flesh what God began in the Spirit. Although a battle will be waged the Lord will win because I have denied myself today and will by faith believe He is both Savior and Lord. No longer believing a lie I believe the truth.

Re: - posted by AEG, on: 2005/5/13 10:06

Everytime I have heard someone speak of "willful sin" it has always been in the context of continually choosing to commit a particular sin. For example: A porn addict, male or female, comes to Christ and begins to learn and grow in their understanding of the Word and of what sin is and they realize at some point that looking at pornography is sin, yet they continue daily to choose to visit pornographic websites even knowing that it is an abomination to God. This continual choice for sin is what I have heard referred to as "willful sin".

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/13 11:11

Anything done against your conscience (with knowledge) is sin or some would call it "willful sin". I don't know of any other sin but this type of sin. Everything else I consider to not be sin.

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/15 1:43

I was going through a hard time tonight with this unassurance issue. It mainly dealt with lack of an emotional experience during the day. I read some scripture tonight and got away silently to pray and contemplate these things.

I was led back to the fact that Jesus is my advocate with the Father and the harder I try to hang on to Him the farther away I feel from Him. He was telling me why are you trying to hold on I have you already. My confidence wains because I am earning my salvation at this point by trying to hang on to what is freely given. I'm trying to hang on to His Lordship. If He is not Lord I ask then how can He be my Savior? The answer is if He is your Savior He has to be your Lord. To have forsaken my sins and trusted He becomes my Savior and that trust in Him being Savior is why He is Lord. All the fruits of the Spirit come from the confidence that He is my Savior. These fruits are evidence of His Lordship. Knowing they spring from the confident trust in His perfect sacrifice for my sin and that I have forsaken all for Him and what He did He must be Lord. It happens by default. It can't be any other way. Any other way is dead religion. It's a form of godliness with no power.

Re: The Blood, the Cross and the Name of the Lord Jesus - posted by eagleswings (), on: 2005/5/15 22:19

Hi AsliEren and others,

Perhaps you're using the wrong weapons in the battle.

Don't let anything stop you from doing yourself a BIG favor.

Check out The Blood, the Cross and the Name of the Lord Jesus at Austin-Sparks.net

<http://austin-sparks.net/english/001469.html>

He begins in the following way:

“I have it on my heart to spend just a little time in considering these three matters; namely, the Blood, the Cross, and the Name of the Lord Jesus.

“There is something related to each of them which is very important, especially for the Lord's people, and that is, to discriminate between them, for there is a good deal of indiscriminate use of these words and terms, and I think that confusion or misuse very often means weakness and failure in getting through to the desired end. It is important when we go into war to know what weapons we need, and to be able to choose and intelligently use those weapons; for to be in a war are using a certain kind of weapon which we discover is not the one that effects the end is a very embarrassing situation. And so it is important for the Lord's people to be able to understand the peculiar value and meaning of these different things which have so close a relationship to their spiritual victory. It is also very important for unsaved men and women to know the meaning of these terms, these words which are so frequently upon Christian lips: "the Blood of Jesus Christ", "the Cross of the Lord Jesus", "the Name of Jesus". We have no thought of covering the whole of that ground in this short space, we can merely introduce it and touch upon it as the Lord leads.”

Roger

Re: AsliEren, on: 2005/5/16 7:33

Rest beloved. Your theology is right on. Rest in Him. Let God be all He can be in you. Rest in Him. It's forgiven, forgotten, and covered in red.

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/16 8:08

Hey Lahry and Roger,

I'm doing better with this assurance issue. I come to the accuser which I believe to be me with the Blood. The fact that I have denied myself by coming to my own lies with the Blood means I have come with my cross also. He says "Deny yourself take up 'your' cross and follow me daily." In other terms I come with the knowledge that I have been buried with Christ and I am alive in Him. My life of faith utilizes the name and person of Jesus but only after I have made use of the cross and the blood. I would agree with Sparks. He is right on. His overemphasis on the authority Satan has is the only thing I don't agree with. Satan can't be omnipresent.

Thanks for the encouragement Lahry. Hebrews 10 has helped me see that this issue I'm facing is a confidence issue not a salvation issue. At the same time it has let me see that a confidence issue in the mind will be seen as a salvation issue until it is dealt with.

Re:, on: 2005/5/16 8:21

Please read Romans 5,6,7&8 prayerfully until God floods your soul with the light of it. It's finished beloved. If it is not finished, then there is no rest in Christ Jesus. It is complete and it is yours by faith. Flesh will argue. Flesh is dead. Satan will argue. Satan is condemned. Believe God. Have faith in God. And rest on His sure promise. They will not be disappointed who's faith is solely on the finished work of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Alleluia.

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/16 17:26

Will do Lahry

Unassurance - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/5/17 10:35

May I suggest that you read the first chapter of Watchman Nee "The Normal Christian Life", if you don't have the book (which I recommend to you), here is a link:

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/nee/normal.toc.html>

Manfred

Re: Unassurance - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/17 12:40

I have read the normal Christian life by Watchman Nee. It was very helpful. Thanks for the suggestion. My problem is that I willful sin way too much. It doesn't take many days before I have done it once again. Each time I come back to God in my mind and by faith I find that it takes more time than I would like and there is a lot of anguish. I go through the confusion of disbelieving what I justified to be right to now be wrong. Then after believing it to be wrong I believe in faith what Christ did for me. For awhile I just feel nothing. My prayers just seem to hit a wall and go nowhere and my heart isn't in it. Then somewhere along the way my heart gets in it and I begin to believe the word and prayer comes easy and the grace of the blood is coupled again with the grace of the cross and I find a liberty where sin used to reside. This is the process. It takes on different forms but comes back in my life this way or that every once in awhile. I hate it every time and find it to be a scary place to be.

I read Romans 4:5, 6, 7 and 8 and I thank you for the suggestion Lahry. It affected my heart and changed my ways. About Romans 4:20

Rom 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

Rom 4:21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Rom 4:22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

When I sin and then forsake it right after I then go into staggering at God's promises until I finally am fully persuaded and then I feel safe and secure knowing that He is faithful and am able to pick up my cross deny myself and follow Him.

Unassurance - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/5/17 15:06

Listen. We are all sinners saved by grace. And we will remain sinners until Christ comes. Having said that, we should make no excuse for any sin that takes place in our lives. However: none of us can fight sin on our own. When we were born from above, God gave us a new life, the life of Christ, the resurrection life - and He expects us to live by this life. Don't try to overcome sin by your own strength: no one has ever managed to do it - sin is more powerful than we are, i.e. than our own strength.

As believers we live, and must live, by faith. I can't overcome sin, but the Lord who lives within me can - we must rest on His promises: "It is no longer I who lives, but Christ lives in me", this is the way to victory. Paul's cry in Romans 7 is that on his own he cannot overcome sin, but in Romans 8 he gives us the way to victory: by faith - because for us all is by faith - he rests on the accomplished work of Another.

When we sin, we confess and repent, get up and move on. But at the same time, Christ must continually take a larger place in us. This is done through the Spirit who lives in us. Before we think, say or do anything we should take the time to consider our thoughts, words and actions before God - we must submit them to the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit and listen to His approval or disapproval. Such is the life of the Christian.

Too many of us believers try to live the Christian life by our own strength - it is a lost battle. We must all learn to let Christ live in and through us: He only can match the standard that He has set for those who belong to Him.

I'm really hoping that you will see this, because it is the only way to victory.

Re: Unassurance - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/17 15:31

I agree Manfred it is all about faith in God. It's just when I am down and defeated by sin it takes awhile to pick myself back up again or longer then I would want. It's like letting go of a mistress you might say. You like her at first but then you realize that your cheating and then realize how horrible that is until you finally decide to forsake her and be completely devoted to your wife again.

unassurance - posted by Manfred, on: 2005/5/17 15:55

We are all the same. When we sin, we do feel horrible, but it isn't the time to feel sorry for ourselves: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.", 1 John 1:9

When you sin don't linger about it, get on your knees, confess and repent - and trust Him. I think that you are far too introverted, look to Him:

"If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.", Colossians 3:1

"Therefore... let us lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus.", Hebrews 12:1-2.

Feeling sorry for ourselves, or for our condition has never helped anyone - look to Him.

Re: unassurance - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/18 0:29

I like your faith Manfred it is Christ in you and that is really something. You don't see that often. I will heed your advice it's wise counsel. Praise God for His Word and his body.

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/26 12:59

I wanted to share how God has come through for me today. I have been struggling a lot and not letting God be faithful to carry out His plan in my life.

It always comes down to sinning against God in this body of flesh that wars against my Spirit. I give in to it too often.

My sin is coveting. I covet other people's attention any way I can get it it seems. This is my idol. The fear of intimacy in a relationship is a symptom of this sin of idolatry and coveting spirit. Sin breeds fear and condemnation and guilt. They take over. My feelings then turn me spiritually dead regarding my conscience. My heart isn't in it anymore and I mope a

round kind of lost. I basically feel lost.

Thank God though I have been doing less of this coveting and idolatry that takes the place of God in my life. I'm trusting more by faith because I lean not on my repented of sin of covetting and idolatry put rest in Jesus. Abiding in Him more has really helped. The reality of God in my life is so real sometimes and I kill it by sinning. I thank God He sprinkles my conscience once again with His blood and I live by faith once again no longer seeing or believing from a sinful heart. What a glorious feeling it is! Praise God I love Him! I know I write on here how many times I fail and then come back to God and fail again. It's a constant cycle but things are getting better. He is trying to change some very basic things that have never been changed in my life so that I can move on and be used by Him.

Re: - posted by AsliEren, on: 2005/5/26 13:17

If anyone else has been set free for a good period of time of covetting others and living victoriously I would love to hear a testimony or two.

I would assume covetting attention from others and from women for us single guys is something that affects a majority of us here. It would be cool to hear so good feedback to encourage everyone.