

# Patrick Donahue’s First Affirmative Against “Once Saved Always Saved”

I am happy to engage apologist Steve Morrison in this friendly exchange on the important Bible question “Is It Possible For A Genuine Christian To Lose Their Salvation?” I appreciate Steve’s willingness to defend (Philippians 1:17) what he believes, either in written or oral form.

**Galatians 5:4** reads, “Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace” (ASV). The standard Baptist position is a Christian cannot fall from grace, but this verse points out specifically that it is possible. First I suggest that this verse has to be talking about Christians:

- you can’t be severed from something (Christ) that you were never connected to
- you can’t fall from a tree (grace) that you weren’t in to start with
- the verse is written “unto the churches of Galatia” (1:2), “brethren” (1:11, 3:15, 4:12, 31, 5:11, 13, 6:1, 18), “children of God” (3:26), adopted “sons” of God who had received the Holy Spirit (4:5-6)

Second, notice from verse 2 (“Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing”) that the “grace” fallen from in verse 4 has to refer to our personal salvation. You can’t be saved if Christ profits you nothing, can you? As a matter of fact, the only way you can be saved is if the death of Christ profits you. The conclusion is that Christians who try to be justified by the law (like Seventh Day Adventists) are “fallen from grace” (salvation).

**Revelation 3:5** says, “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” Notice also Revelation 22:19: “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life ....” Remember that the “book of life” contains the names of all the saved:

- Revelation 20:15 whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.
- Revelation 21:27 no one will “enter into it (heaven) any thing that defileth, neither ... worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

So only the saved are in the “book of life” to start with. And if it is possible to get your name blotted out / taken away from the book of life, then it is clear that it is possible for a saved person to lose their salvation.

**James 5:19-20** reads, “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” Notice the following facts about this passage:

- talking about “brethren” (Christians) [see also 1:16, 19, 2:1-2, 3:1, 5:7]
- the brother errs from the truth DID
- now called a “sinner” NOT
- needs converting PERSEVERE
- if not converted back, his soul dies because of a multitude of sins

James 5:19-20 therefore teaches that a brother in Christ can lose his soul.

**I Corinthians 9:25-27** says, “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. ... But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I ... should be a castaway.” Paul is saying here he strives/runs to obtain an “incorruptible crown.” That’s heaven, right? Then he goes on to say that if he doesn’t keep his body under subjection, if he doesn’t control the fleshly desires, he would become a “castaway.” Castaway from what? The “incorruptible crown” (heaven) obviously. So Paul recognized the possibility of even himself being lost. The Greek word translated “castaway” here (*Strong’s #96*) is translated “reprobate” 6 out of 8 times in the New Testament (e.g., II Corinthians 13:5). And “reprobate” is defined by “Random House” to mean “rejected by God and beyond hope of salvation.” This agrees with God’s definition for “reprobate” in Jeremiah 6:30, “the Lord hath rejected them.” If it was possible for Paul (one of the greatest gospel preachers in history) to be “rejected by God,” then it’s certainly possible for any Christian to be “rejected by God.”

**I Corinthians 8:11** reads, “And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died.” This verse is talking about a “brother” (a Christian), one for whom Christ died. The Greek word translated “perish” here (*Strong’s* #622) is also found in the following verses:

- Matthew 10:28 “fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna”
- Matthew 18:11 “come to save that which was lost.”
- John 3:16 “gave his only ... Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish”
- II Thessalonians 2:10 “unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”
- II Peter 3:9 “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Is there any doubt about what “perish” means in I Corinthians 8:11? So it is certainly possible for a Christian to be lost. This is confirmed by the parallel, Romans 14:15,23 – “But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, ... Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. ... he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” It is possible for a brother to be condemned.

**II Peter 2:20-22** says, “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and

the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” Notice the following facts about the people under consideration in this passage:

- had escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ (pollutions = sins, not smog)
- sow was washed (of those sins)
- verse 1 - “the Lord that bought them” (died for them)
- so clearly, they were Christians
- then they became entangled again in their sins
- their current state is worse than if they had never become Christians to begin with

Worse than non-saved wouldn't mean they were still saved, would it?

**II Peter 1:9-11** reads, “But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

The man in this passage:

- had been “purged from his old sins” (saved)
- needed to make his calling and election sure - implying he could lose his calling and election
- had the possibility of falling away from his election/salvation, that is, losing entrance “into the everlasting kingdom of ... Jesus Christ” (verse 11)

So if a Christian does not add the “Christian graces” (verses 5-7), he will fall from his election/salvation; he will not enter the “everlasting kingdom.”

**Hebrews 3:12** says, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from ...

God.” Those addressed are “brethren.” Verse 1 puts it this way: “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.” Notice perseverance is not an absolute certainty for these brethren, not even for the writer of Hebrews himself:

- verse 6 “... whose house are we (present tense), IF we hold fast the confidence and ... hope firm unto the end.”
- verse 14 “... we are made partakers (perfect tense – present state resulting from a past action) of Christ, IF we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”

This would be similar to: “We are made partakers of the benefits of the National Honor Society if (as long as) we hold to a 3.5 grade point average.” Take note:

- My opponent says a believer in Christ cannot become an unbeliever. This verse says he can.
- My opponent says a brother in Christ cannot depart from God. This verse says he can.
- My opponent says a brother in Christ cannot lose his salvation. Hebrews 3:6,12,14 teaches that he can.

John 3:36b describes the fate of the believer who changes to unbelief: “he that believeth not ... shall not see life.”

**John 15:2,6** reads, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. ... If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” In this section:

- Jesus is the vine, and the branches are people (verse 5)
- these people are Christians - “in me” (in Christ), “clean through the word” (verse 3)
- if these Christians don’t bear fruit, they are taken away, cast forth, and burned - sound familiar?

So if a Christian does not bear fruit, he will end up being burned in everlasting punishment.

**Hebrews 10:26-27** says, “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” This passage is talking about Christians:

- verse 19 brethren
- verse 25 don't forsake the church assembly

According to the passage, if the Christian sins willfully, he will be lost:

- verse 26 no more sacrifice for sins (benefits of Jesus' sacrifice no longer applied)
- verse 27 fearful judgment and fiery indignation

So Christians who sin willfully cease to receive the benefits of the sacrifice of Christ. Instead they face a fiery judgment. Christians who sin willfully will be lost in everlasting fire.

**Acts 8:12-13,22-23** provides an example of a Christian who fell from grace. It reads, “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip ... Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity.” Consider these points:

- Simon had believed also (just like the other Samaritans) and had been baptized, therefore he was saved (Mark 16:16).

- He tried to buy the miraculous power to lay on hands.
- He needed to be forgiven as he was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.

Question: What would have happened to Simon if he had not repented and not been forgiven? Simon proves a Christian can fall from grace, because the inspired record shows he actually did.

**I John 1:9** says “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Acts 8:22 reads, “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.” So a Christian must repent of and confess his sins in order to be forgiven of them. The question is, what if he refuses to do that?:

- Romans 6:23 the wages of sin is death
- Revelation 14:13 Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord
- Revelation 21:8 But the ... unbelieving, ... murderers, ... and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

If a Christian dies, refusing to repent of and confess his sins, he will be lost.

## **A Christian’s Salvation Is Conditional.**

If when we are saved, we can’t be lost, passages like the following are meaningless:

- I Corinthians 15:1-2 ... brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, ... which ... ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved IF ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.



- Opponent – those who have truly received and stand in the gospel as the text says, can't fail to keep it in memory, and can't help but be saved.
- Revelation 2:9-10 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou are rich) ... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.
- Opponent – Those who are truly rich in faith can't fail to remain faithful, and can't help but receive a crown of life.
- I John 1:9 IF we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins ...
- Opponent – If we are of the elect, we will be forgiven even if we don't repent of and confess our sins, and if we are not of the elect, we won't be forgiven even if we do repent/confess.

There is overwhelming, clear scriptural evidence. It is possible for a genuine Christian to lose their salvation. Indeed, a child of God can be disinherited (Numbers 14:12). Live your life with that in mind.

Steve Morrison / Patrick Donahue Debate – Once Saved Always Saved – 2005

Article 2 – Morrison's First Negative

# **Steve Morrison's First Rebuttal Supporting Once-Saved- Always-Saved**

In order to best respond, let me first make my own position (perseverance) clear, because there are some differences among

those who hold to once-saved-always saved, and my view might not be exactly what might he think it is. You will see why I even need the verses he brought up to support my position. Also, let me say that if a person has a wrong view on once-saved-always-saved, I believe they can still be a genuine Christian, effectively serving the Lord.

## **The Perseverance Position in a Nutshell**

1. **Foreknowledge and predestination:** Before the universe began, God knew with complete certainty every individual who would be saved and lost, He chose us (Ephesians 1:4,11; Titus 1:2; Romans 8:28-30; 9:22-23; Matthew 22:14) and there are no surprises with the God who knows everything (1 John 3:20; Isaiah 46:10-11; Psalm 139:16, see Romans 11:29). However, God's foreknowledge and predestination neither coerced anyone to sin, nor reduced their responsibility. The fault of why they lost the salvation that could be theirs (Jonah 2:8) is entirely their own (Matthew 23:37-39; Luke 7:30).
2. **Assurance:** Believers can have assurance (1 John 5:13,18; Romans 8:31-38), confidence (Ephesians 3:12), and a guarantee of salvation (Ephesians 1:14), based on God's promise, strength, and active working through the Holy Spirit (Jude 24). No one can snatch us out of God's hand (John 10:29).
3. **Not by Works:** We not only needed God's initiative, leading, help, and strength to get saved (by grace through faith), we need God's help and sustaining strength to stay saved (by grace through faith). We are called of God (2 Tim 1:9; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 1:24,29-30; Ephesians 1:18). We do not get saved by works, and we do not stay saved by works either. So what role do works have? Works are evidence that we have a living faith, as brain waves are evidence of being alive (Ephesians 2:10; James 2:14-26).

4. We **strive hard** for Christ (Romans 12:11-12), to be more holy and Christlike (1 Peter 1:16; Ephesians 5:1), not to earn the right to keep salvation, but for love of God (Romans 12:1-2), looking to what Jesus did for us (Philippians 3:12-14; Hebrews 3:1; 12:2-3; 2 Corinthians 5:15), because reward in Heaven (1 Corinthians 4 3:11-14; Galatians 5:9), and compassion for others (Philippians 1:24-26; Colossians 1:24). We are a new creation in Christ, and we want to follow our new nature (Romans 6:1-7; 7:4-6; 8:8:5-17; 2 Cor 5:17; Galatians 2:19-20).
5. However, **counterfeit conversion** happens in the Bible and today, where people within the visible church can believe for a while and then leave (1 John 2:19), and people who intellectually believe can fool not only others but also themselves (Matthew 7:21-23). Some who were never saved can know the scriptures (John 5:39-47), have a false assurance (Jeremiah 17:9-10), and have a form of godliness but deny its power (2 Timothy 3:1-5). They can escape the world's corruption for a while, but then be overcome (2 Peter 2:17-22; 1 Peter 1:9-11). Some can perish without seeing a need for a savior for themselves (1 John 1:9-10).
6. We are commanded to **test that we are in the faith** (doctrinally in 1 Corinthians 3:18-20; 15:1-6; by our works in James 2:14-26; in love in 1 John 2:9 and Revelation 2:4, and in our lives in 1 Corinthians 5:12-13; 6:9-11; 2 Peter 1:10-11). How are we to make our hope sure (Hebrews 6:11)? The genuine elect will persevere, if they are the genuine elect (2 Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 1:23; 1 John 2:19).
7. Our **balanced attitude** should be gratitude and confidence in God (Hebrews 10:35), not pride and self-confidence (Philippians 3:3-11); Watchfulness of our life and doctrine striving hard (2 Peter 3:14), not lazy complacency (Hebrews 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:12). We are to have a reverent fear of the awesome Lord, not dread of future trials (Hebrews 12:18-29). Paul writes, of our responsibility to “work-out” our own

salvation because God is working in us in Philippians 2:12b-13.

8. There is a **lostness** in two senses but not a third. **By birth** we were estranged from God (Ephesians 2:1-3; 11-13); none of us had the Holy Spirit from birth, (except for John the Baptist in Luke 1:15). **Visibly**, people can appear to be Christians, but they wither and fall away (Matthew 13:5,20-21), and be eternally lost. However, God does not change His mind. He does not “unpredestine”, “unchoose”, or “unregenerate” the elect.

As my nine-year old daughter asked, if a real Christian stopped being a Christian would they go to Heaven or Hell?

Many Arminians say “No”; they lost their salvation.

Cheap grace says “Yes”; they came forward, once intellectually believed, and said some words.

Perseverance says “No”; like Simon in Acts 8:13,20, they were never genuine believers in the first place.

I recommend carefully studying the verses Patrick brought up, not only because they show cheap grace to be wrong, but they are also good verses to demonstrate the “counterfeit conversion” and “test yourself” points. Now allow me to give what I think is some needed correction and Biblical balance to Patrick’s fitting together of these important verses.

**Galatians 5:4** the Greek word here, *katergethete*, means severed, alienated, or estranged, and the verse says “fall from grace”, not “fall from salvation”. A genuine Christian can fall from living in the grace of Christ due to legalism, even as the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13-30) and Peter (Galatians 2:11), but Peter did not lose his salvation. In addition, consistent with the “counterfeit conversions” and “test yourself” points, a reprobate person can hear the truth, but turn aside from grace to legalism. But nobody

should use this verse against legalism, to support a legalism of staying saved by works.

## **Revelation 3:5; 20:15; 21:27; (not 22:19)**

does mention the Book of those who are saved. All who are not written in the book will perish, but God chose us before the foundation of the world (**Ephesians 1:4**). **Ephesians 1:11** and **Roman 8:29** say we are predestined. Now we might want to discuss exactly what that means, all Christians have to agree that at least somehow, Christians are predestined. The promises at the end of each of the seven Revelation churches are for all believers to hope in. Revelation 3:5 gives only positive affirmation, providing genuine Christians comfort that in no way will our names ever be blotted out of the book of life.

By the way, there is overwhelming evidence that Revelation 22:19 is actually “tree of life”, not “book of life”. Only 1 or 2 late Greek manuscripts says “book”; all others say “tree”. However, in the 1500’s when Erasmus made his copy, the Greek manuscript he used was missing the last six verses; so he translated back from the Latin textus receptus, which said “book”. As the NKJV says in a footnote, this is one place where the textus receptus [“book”: *ligno* in Latin] differs from the majority text [“tree”: *libro* in Latin]. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 12 p.603, *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.13, *The Expositor’s Greek New Testament* volume 5 p.493, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : New Testament* p.990, Aland et al. in their 3rd and 4th editions, *A Textual Commentary on the New Testament* 2nd edition p.690, the NASB and NIV for more info.

**James 5:19-20** can refer to two cases: one who never was genuinely saved in the first place, and a genuinely saved person who turned away to sin (but was still saved), and then was brought back and persevered. It cannot be a person who is genuinely saved, loses their salvation, and then gets saved a second time, because that goes against **Hebrews 6:4-8** and **10:26-31**.

**I Corinthians 9:25-27** has the context of a crown, which is rewards in heaven, not salvation. Yes, Paul could have lost his rewards in Heaven, though Paul had confidence he was called to go heavenward (Philippians 3:14). Paul discusses heavenly rewards and their loss in detail in 2 Corinthians 3:8-15. By the way, Jer 6:30 refers to the entire people of Israel, not just individual salvation.

**I Corinthians 8:11** does refer to real perishing in Hell, and the “brother” is a member of the visible church who falls away and perishes. One of the genuine elect will not go to Hell.

**II Peter 2:20-22** I think is one of the best verses to show cheap grace is wrong. But notice that they were always dogs, always pigs, and 1 John 2:19 is still true. Yes they appeared to others as Christians, but they were never one of the elect, for those cleaned-up dogs and pigs were never genuinely born again.

**II Peter 1:9-11** shows that a person can have a cleaned up life for a while, but fall away and be eternally lost, as 2 Peter 2:20-22 also shows. 2 Peter 1:10: “making your calling sure”, as well as 2 Corinthians 13:5, are important truths. No one is ever “unelected”, but believers should make sure we are not deceived counterfeit Christians. Contrary to what you implied, a Christian does not stay saved by his Christian graces or any other works or merits either (Galatians 3:2-3).

**Hebrews 3:12** is a serious reminder of the “counterfeit conversion” and “test yourself” points. Hebrews 3:13-15 does not sound pleasant, but God’s warnings to all of use are not meant to be pleasant. But these are actually words of love, for our benefit, that God warns us, to test ourselves that we are not counterfeit

Christians. Hebrews 3:16-19 shows that this is referring to eternal lostness, not loss of reward. You can look at this as eternal loss of salvation offered to all (1 John 2:2), not any loss or specific salvation or “un-predestination”. When Jesus said people were lost, he did NOT mean everybody is born found and saved, and some get lost. Yes, these and other verses show a condition, but it is a condition of demonstration of result, not cause. It does not mean if you do not do works (and show Christlike character), it will cause you to lose salvation. Rather, if a person does not do work and show Christlike character that demonstrates the result that they never were a genuine believer. I do believe someone who is a “believer”, whom others and he himself think is a genuine Christian, can become an unbeliever and depart from God and His truth. However, they were never a genuine believer, and they cannot depart from a true abiding relationship with God.

**John 15:2-6** does not mean that believers earn keeping their salvation. This warning is for people who think they are genuine Christians, but are counterfeit, and their lack of fruit proves it. They will be pruned, cut off from the life of Christ, and perish forever. Counterfeit Christians can temporarily be “clean” her just as dogs and sows can in 2 Peter 2:22. Remaining in Christ, which gives evidence of fruit, includes remaining in your mind, heart, and outward life.

**Hebrews 10:26-27** refers to people who leave the faith, depend on another instead of Christ, and end up in Hell. As Romans 8:29 and 1 John 2:19 show, they were “never among us”, or predestined in the first place. These verses rule out a second salvation. Yet I have known people who have left the faith, in one case praying that God get out of their life, in another case becoming a Mormon, and yet later both repented and came back to Christ. How can this be? These people were not “saved again”, but Hebrews 10:26-27 and 6:4-8 refer to counterfeit Christians who do not persevere and never come back.

**Acts 8:12-13,22-23** uses a different word for believed than saving faith. Simon intellectually believed (*episteuse*), but it never says He truly believed (*pestuvo*). As a side note, though Simon could have repented and truly believe later, Church History tells us that he never did. In fact, he started a heresy, went to Rome, and had people worship him as a god according to *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History* (book 2 chapters 1,13).

**I John 1:9; Acts 8:22** a Christian must confess, repent, and believe. You ask, “what if he refuses to do that?” The answer is simple: he is going to Hell, because, regardless of what he might claim, he never was a genuine Christian in the first place. I think your other verses, Romans 6:23, Revelation 14:13; Revelation 21:8, are good verses to show how important these things are to demonstrate our salvation. How many Christians will die, refusing to repent of and confess their sins, and be lost? I think the answer is zero genuine Christians, but many counterfeit Christians.

**A genuine, persevering Christian is unconditionally saved by God’s grace, with no merit from his own works or perseverance.**

I feel 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 is one of the most significant verses in the Bible to show vital doctrine verses eternally fatal error, and it is important to support the “counterfeit conversion” point. Likewise 1 John 1:9 is supports the “not by works” point. Now these are problems for cheap grace, but not perseverance. Revelation 2:9-10 refers to a crown; that is, rewards in heaven. Not all the saved have rewards in Heaven, as 1 Corinthians 3:13-15 and 9:25-27 show.

Numbers 14:12 is punishment in this life, and is questionable to refer to salvation. However, I agree with your thrust, that we should live “on guard”, examining ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5). However, you left out the balance that we also live with assurance



knowing we have eternal life (1 John 5:13), with a guarantee of the eternal life (Ephesians 1:14-15). How is eternal life eternal if it could be only temporary? How is it an unearned gift if we have to earn keeping it?

In John 3:16 God promised that “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him, should not perish...” Praise God for everlasting life!

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Article 3 – Donahue’s Second Affirmative

# Patrick Donahue’s Second Affirmative Against “Once Saved Always Saved”

Let me begin by commenting on a few things in Steve’s “Position in a Nutshell” section that relate to the issue at hand. First John 10:29 is used to assert that no man is able to snatch us out of God’s hand. The word “snatch” itself indicates that what is under consideration here is someone taking us out of God’s hand by force. This of course is impossible. God is infinitely too strong for that. But the real question is, can we voluntarily leave God’s hand? The following two verses imply that we can:

- Jude verse 21 “Keep yourselves in the love of God ...”
- Revelation 3:11 “... hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown ...”

So it is possible for a man to “snatch/take” us out of God’s hand if we allow it. It is our responsibility to keep ourselves

in God's love, a statement that makes no sense whatsoever if it is impossible for us to fall out of God's love.

## Saved By Works

Steve goes on to say we are not saved by works, but the Bible reads "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). This doesn't mean that a person's good works earn his salvation; to the contrary, the blood of Christ does that (Matthew 26:28). But it does mean that our salvation is absolutely conditioned upon our obedience to God (Hebrews 5:9). This is equivalent in concept to the knocking down of the walls of Jericho. Joshua 6:2 teaches that the walls fell by grace (it was "given" to them). Hebrews 11:30 says the walls fell "by faith." Joshua 24:13 says God had "given" the Israelites "a land for which ye did not labour" (earn by works). But did the Israelites have to meet any conditions in order for God to knock those walls down and give them the city and land? Steve would agree that the answer is a resounding yes (Joshua 6:3-21)! So having to meet conditions does not negate the fact that God gives us something "by grace through faith" (Ephesians 2:8-9). If this is true of the walls of Jericho, pray tell me why the same wouldn't be true of our salvation from sin? Obedience is just as necessary a salvation condition of salvation as belief is (Matthew 7:21).

Steve asserts "The genuine elect will persevere, if they are the genuine elect (2 Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 1:23; 1 John 2:19)." But II Corinthians 13:5 says nothing close to that. And Colossians 1:23 teaches the very opposite. It reads beginning in verse 22, "... to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel ...." The necessary implication

is that Jesus will not present us holy, unblameable, and unrepentable if we do not continue in the faith and/or are moved away from the gospel hope. Paul's statement here only make sense if it is possible for a Christian to cease continuing in the faith and to move away from the hope of the gospel, the result being eternal rejection by God. And I John 2:19 doesn't help Steve's position either, because all you can get from this text is that at the time these people went out they were not "of us." No respected version says they "never belonged to us," which is what Steve needs to give evidence for his position that those who fall away "were never genuine believers in the first place." But even if this passage did teach that those who left were "never" of us, that does not contradict our position, because we believe that many who think and claim they are Christians have never actually become Christians to begin with.

## **Galatians 5:4**

Steve's response to my argument on Galatians 5:4 is essentially that "A genuine Christian can fall from living in the grace of Christ," but that is not the same as to "fall from salvation." First, this contradicts Steve's previously stated position that people who stop living the Christian life "were never genuine believers in the first place." Second, Steve's response won't work if you consider the context. In talking about the same people, Galatians 5:2 says "Christ shall profit you nothing." Can a person be saved if he is not profited by the death of Christ? Certainly not; therefore since "falling from grace" is equivalent to "Christ shall profit you nothing," Galatians 5:4 is talking about falling away from salvation. Steve next asserts without proof that Peter did not lose his salvation in Galatians 2, but if you examine what he did in light of II John verse 9 ("Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God"),

you will have to conclude that Peter was without God in his transgression (Galatians 2:14,17,18). Surely Steve doesn't think a person can be saved without God.

## **Revelation 3:5**

Steve writes "Revelation 3:5 gives only positive affirmation, providing genuine Christians comfort that in no way will our names ever be blotted out of the book of life." But if words mean anything, the implication of Revelation 3:5 is that it is possible for a Christian to fail to overcome, and if he fails, his name will be blotted out of the book of life (lose his salvation). This is plain. It should be very easy for the reader to judge what the Bible teaches in this verse.

## **James 5:19-20**

Steve's basic answer doesn't address what I said about James 5:19-20, so I will repeat here. The passage considers a "brother" who errs from the truth. He needs converting, because if he isn't converted, his soul will die. That proves my position beyond doubt that it is possible for a brother in Christ to sin so as to be lost. Steve said it might be addressing someone who was never genuinely saved, but God said it was a brother. Steve said it might be talking about a brother who turned away but was still saved, but the text says his soul would die if he was not converted back. Steve says that my position on the verse would contradict Hebrews 6:4-8 and 10:26-31. Hebrews 6:4-8 shows that it is possible for a Christian to "fall away," but that he will not be converted back as long as he crucifies to himself the Son of God afresh. That concurs with my position exactly. I will address Hebrews 10:26-31 below.

## **I Corinthians 9:25-27**

Steve asserts that the “crown” (possibly lost in I Corinthians 9:27) represents rewards in heaven, even though every time this word is used in the new testament as a reward, it is talking about the reward of heaven itself. The same idea here is found in James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10 which terms it “crown of life.” This has to be talking about heaven itself, else a person can go to heaven without (spiritual) life. Steve ignored my main point here that Paul could possibly become a “reprobate,” which means “rejected by God” (according to Random House and Jeremiah 6:30). It is simply amazing to me that Steve’s position has a person “rejected by God” still going to heaven, but only losing some rewards in heaven.

## **I Corinthians 8:11**

I Corinthians 8:11 actually says that a “brother” can be lost. Steve’s response is that this was not a genuine brother, but only a brother visibly. The only problem with that is the inspired writer says it was a brother, not just someone “called a brother” as in I Corinthians 5:11. And if God says someone is a brother, I think He would know. He wouldn’t be deceived by a pretender.

## **II Peter 2:20-22**

Steve’s response to my argument on II Peter 2:20-22 is that the persons in question were always dogs and pigs. But he is missing the point of the analogy. The illustration is that the dog leaves the vomit, and the sow is cleaned up. That represents the changing point of becoming a Christian. The pig being cleaned of mud illustrates a sinner being cleaned of his sins. This is confirmed by the actual text which says these people had escaped the sins of the world through the knowledge of Jesus Christ. This could only describe a person becoming a Christian.

## **II Peter 1:9-11**

Steve's response to II Peter 1:9-11 is that these people who fell had never become Christians to begin with. But the text says this person was "purged from his old sins." The ASV has "cleansing" and the NASV has "purification" where the KJV has "purged." I don't know how much plainer it could be that this person had been forgiven of his sins. The text goes on to say that this person who could fall needed to make his calling and election sure, which refutes Steve's assertion that "No one is ever 'unelected.'" Is it possible that people are being more loyal to a particular belief system than to God's word and what it says beyond question?

## **Hebrews 3:12**

Steve's response to Hebrews 3:12 is similar to his other responses; a genuine brother is not under consideration. But the inspired text says he was a "brother." Do I need to remind Steve that "inspired" means that God wrote it and therefore it cannot be wrong? If God himself says these people were "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (verse 1), just why doesn't Steve believe it is really so? And just like it is impossible to depart from Atlanta if you never were there to begin with, it is impossible to "depart from the living God" if you never were with Him (saved) to begin with.

## **John 15:2,6**

In this section Steve claims that "Counterfeit Christians can temporarily be 'clean,'" but I think the reader knows better. Counterfeit Christians receive no cleansing from sin whatsoever. And Steve ignored Jesus' point here that these people were "in" Christ. Steve, are counterfeit Christians "in Christ"?

## Hebrews 10:26-27

Steve again claims this passage is talking about “counterfeit Christians,” but the inerrant word of God calls them “brethren” in verse 19. Do we love God enough to accept what He plainly says (Luke 6:46)? There is nothing in this passage to preclude a “second salvation” (as Steve terms it), anymore than John 3:36b precludes a first salvation.

## Acts 8:12-13,22-23

Steve claims that the Greek word for “believed (*episteuse*)” in Acts 8:13 is not a word that refers to saving faith, but Steve doesn’t really even believe his own argument here, unless he thinks the Samaritans of verse 12 were not saved either. The same Greek word (Strong’s 4100) is in verse 12. Steve believes the believers of verse 12 were saved, and verse 13 says that Simon believed (same Greek word) also. The word “also” indicates Simon believed just like they did. Either both the Samaritans and Simon were saved or they were both lost. The word “also” indicates the same thing happened to both of them. And this same Greek word for “believed” (4100) is used in countless places where Steve thinks it is referring to saving faith (John 3:16, Acts 10:43, 16:31, Romans 10:9-10, etc.). Why not here, unless it is only because it doesn’t fit Steve’s theory?

Steve asks “How is eternal life eternal if it could be only temporary?” But “eternal” and “unloseable” are two different concepts. “Eternal” tells how long spiritual life is to last. But that doesn’t mean that spiritual life is “unloseable.” Adam and Eve possessed eternal physical life, but lost it as a result of their first sin (I Corinthians 15:22, Genesis 3:22-24). The same is possible of “eternal” spiritual life.

The reader should ask the following question about this debate: Who is just accepting the plain meaning of the Biblical texts, and who is working real hard to explain away (get around) the plain meaning of the Biblical texts? Yes, it is really true that “the wages of sin is death” for sinner or saint (Romans 6:23). It is possible for a genuine Christian to sin and therefore die spiritually.

Steve Morrison / Patrick Donahue Debate – Once Saved Always Saved – 2005

Article 4 – Morrison’s Second Negative

# **Steve Morrison’s Second Rebuttal Supporting Once-Saved- Always-Saved**

I have to admit, I was very surprised to learn that Patrick believes in Galatians 2:14-18 that Peter the Apostle lost his salvation and was going to Hell. I was less shocked, but still surprised, when I realized that to Patrick, Simon the Sorcerer and Peter were in the same boat, genuine believers where lost their salvation. We hope Peter got it back though, if 1 and 2 Peter were written after this.

Patrick’s view is a symptom of four fundamental misunderstandings: the nature sin, election, crowns, and the visible church. I have to be brief to discuss these four parts, and show two ramifications of these mistakes.



## Every Christian Sins Frequently; We Need God's Continuing Grace

Peter's sin was hypocrisy on whom he would not eat with. Here are some other sins and evil things.

Breaking God's commandment by worrying. Mt 6:25; Php 4:6

Knowing what is good and failing to do it. James 4:17

Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Romans 14:23b

Greed, love of money, or loving money more than God. 1 Cor 5:10; 1 Tim 6:10; Mt 6:24

Loving the world or things in the world. 1 Jn 2:15-16

Slandered (reviler) 1 Corinthians 5:10

Looking with lust. Matthew 5:28

Crude talk. Ephesians 5:4

Children disobeying parents (in the Lord). Ephesians 6:1-2

Speaking evil against another or judging another. James 4:11

Now these sins are serious; Christ had to die for them (as well as others), and apart from God's grace through Christ, just one of these would keep you out of heaven. But God's grace is already applied to the Christian; we do not lose our salvation when we do one of these. However, genuine Christians will reach a point where they repent of these. So correct me if I am wrong Patrick, but I understand your view to be that if a genuine Christian commits a willful sin, they have lost their salvation, though they can repent and gain it back. Let's look at what this theology entails:

How many people have been saved and afterwards never committed even one of these sins? The same number of Christians that have never lost their salvation: probably close to none.

When you are saved you are regenerated. If you lose your salvation and get it back, are you “unregenerated” and then regenerated again, or does the lost person keep his regeneration? If not, when you get your salvation back, i.e. get regenerated again, shouldn't you get baptized again?

Let suppose hypothetically in one week you committed:  
Five unintentional sins, two of which you repented, but three of which you were unaware.

Then four intentional sins, but you saw your error yourself and repented.

Then three occurrences of hypocrisy, and (like Peter), you did not repent until you were rebuked.

Then two sins where you mistakenly thought it was OK, and you will not see for two weeks.

Then one intentional sin you did not repent of because you forgot.

My first question to Patrick is: how many times in this example did you lose your salvation?

My second question is: if you died in this state, would you go to heaven or hell? Yes, no, or you never of any assurance of where you currently would go?

There is a very simple solution for all of this: your first (and only) salvation included forgiveness of sins you will commit as a Christian.

In an any-sin-loses-your-salvation theology, a “brother” can never sin, because when a brother sins, he is no longer a brother. However, Jesus said in Luke 17:3-4 “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent’, forgive him.”

Patrick and I agree that good works do not earn our salvation. However, we differ in that he apparently thinks works / complete obedience / never sinning at all is required to stay saved. And if some sins do not make you lose your salvation and others do, then we would need to know which sins are “mortal” and which are just “venial”. Patrick, if you could narrow down the previous by articulating your view more precisely, that would be good.

## **Election, not Re-election**

Patrick’s view fails to account for verses that show we were the elect of God before creation. This is before we even did anything, though of course God knows all the future. Since Patrick explicitly stated he believes someone who lost their salvation can get it back, do you get un-elected and then re-elected? In the previous example of sins (and sins can keep you from heaven), did God blot some people’s names out of his book many times in one week, and then re-write it many times too? Even if a Christian were completely without any sin 70% of the time, and lost 30% of the time, then I hope we all die on a good minute, not a bad minute.

Predestination and election are NOT Calvinist terms: they are Biblical terms. No Christian has the option of denying them. I am not at all suggesting Patrick become a Calvinist, for I am not one either. But I am asking him to affirm that, regardless of your view of how genuine a person’s salvation can appear to be and they still fall away and go to Hell, that God has certain knowledge of who is ultimately going to heaven and who is not.

The elect are those ultimately going to Heaven, whom God knew and chose before the world began. If you accept this definition of elect, 2 Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 1:23; and 1

John 2:19 do show that the elect will persevere. However, while Patrick has not articulated any belief about the elect, I am guessing we are far apart on our understanding. So I think I recognize why he thinks those scriptures do not reflect what I said. Permit me restate that sentence: "Those who ultimately go to Heaven will persevere, because they are the ones who ultimately go to heaven (2 Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 1:23; 1 John 2:19)." I assume Patrick would then agree with my sentence, taking our difference about the elect out of the way.

The Bible teaches that we are promised a deposit, the Holy Spirit, sealing and guaranteeing us (Romans 8:28-39; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 1:22).

## **Our Crowns**

I was surprised that Patrick did not know that crowns do refer to rewards also.

We do have differing rewards in heaven. (1 Cor 3:8-15)

The prudent are crowned with knowledge. (Proverbs 14:18)

A noble wife is her husband's crown. (Proverbs 12:4)

We cast our crowns before God (Rev 4:10-11), but afterwards we will still be saved.

One of Paul's crowns was not his salvation, but the Philippian believers (Php 4:1) and the Thessalonians (1 Th 2:19).

Thus 1 Cor 9:25-27 and Rev 3:11 cannot be used to show crown means salvation without first assuming what you are trying to prove. I admit that the "crown of life" in James 1:12; Rev 2:10 includes salvation though.

## **Brothers in the Visible Church**

Scripture says there are counterfeit believers among us in the visible church according to 2 Pet 2:1; Mt 7:22-23; Rev 2:14,16,20-23, 3 John 9,10, 1 Cor 5:11. (Patrick would agree here).

There are people in the church who are currently called “false brothers” in 2 Cor 11:26; Gal 2:4.

A key point to refute Patrick is that some Christians in serious sin are called “brothers”, not “false brothers” in 1 Cor 6:6,8.

Christians who were Judaizers were called brothers in Acts 15:1,5 especially 6

You cannot just say a word like brothers always has the same meaning; you have to look at the context. Even non-believing Jews were called brothers in Acts 2:29; 3:17; 7:2; 23:1,5,6.

So for example in James 5:19-20, some people in the visible church do later wander away. Elect brothers are brought back, and counterfeit believers never return and perish in Hell.

Can a false brother have any type of cleansing that does not transform on the inside? 2 Peter 2:20-22 shows “yes”.

1 John 2:19 says “not”, rather than “never” as I mistakenly said. However, in Matthew 7:23, Jesus tells counterfeit Christians I “never” knew you, and I believe the precept is the same. 1 John 2:19 does not say they “do not belong” (present tense), but “did not really belong” (past).

## **Ramification 1: Do we Even Have Eternal Life at All, Except Potentially?**

Patrick does not seem to have any problem with un-biblical concepts of un-salvation, un-sanctification, un-regeneration, un-born again, and un-election. I would like to ask Patrick if this is the reason. I am concerned that Patrick is being

consistent with other Church of Christ teachers who say we do not have eternal life at all, except in a potential sense. Patrick, is your view consistent with these others in the Church of Christ movement?

Walter Scott (1796-1861) in *The Gospel Restored* p.558 says, "No Christian is yet born of the Spirit; this event is the resurrection . . . still in the future."

M. H. Tucker in *Sword of the Spirit* 4/77, p.19 says, "We have eternal life in prospect . . . eternal life follows the judgment; it is received in the world to come".

Tom Warren in *Sword of the Spirit* 4/77, p.30, 31 says, "No one goes into eternal life (as a present possession) when he is baptized," but "he only comes into hope of eternal life at the time he is baptized," "if he lives the faithful Christian life (I John 1:7), he will receive the eternal life which the Lord has promised (I John 2:25)."

In contrast to this, I praise God that we can know we are children of God in 1 John 5:19, and we know we have eternal life in 1 John 5:13.

## **Ramification 2: What Does the Holy Spirit Do in Salvation and "Re-Salvation"?**

If salvation is lost and regained many times in a Christian's life, what role does Patrick think the Holy Spirit has in re-salvation? The Church of Christ has taught that the Holy Spirit has no role in any salvation. Patrick, is your view consistent with the following?

J. H. Parker in *Sword of the Spirit* 4/76, p.10 says, "Thus we see that the eunuch did not need an angel or the Holy Spirit for salvation, but he did need Philip's message for salvation

...

We can further note that the very efforts of the angel and the Holy Spirit in bringing Philip to the eunuch show that such divine agents are to have no direct role in the salvation of a man, rather that a man is to be converted by his hearing another preach the Gospel to him.”

However, 1 Th 1:5 and Acts 16:14 show that the Holy Spirit does work in our salvation. Furthermore, converts received the Holy Spirit prior to water baptism in Acts 10:44-46. If a person intellectually believes and has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit but no water baptism yet, they are still saved.

I admit that the Greek word in Acts 8:13 (*Strong's* 4100) does refer to saving faith in other passages, but you have to look at the context. *Strong's* 4100 does NOT always refer to saving faith, but merely to intellectual assent in James 2:19: “...Even the demons believe – and tremble!” (NKJV). The point is, that having an intellectual belief, and going through water baptism, does not make you a Christian if you do not trust your life to Christ. In particular, Acts 8:14-17 proves they had not received the Holy Spirit yet.

It is not sufficient to look at the plain meaning of only some verses. You have to look at the plain meaning of all of them; we need to interpret scripture using scripture. If a person's theology has no place for a Christian being born again and being transformed when they believe, then it does not matter what verses an interpretation affirms, if it denies other verses. You have to integrate our need to persevere with the nature of sin, election, our crowns, and the visible church.

Steve Morrison / Patrick Donahue Debate – Once Saved Always Saved – 2005

Article 5 – Donahue's Third Affirmative

# Patrick Donahue's Third Affirmative Against "Once Saved Always Saved"

My friend Steve begins his last rebuttal by expressing surprise that someone could actually believe exactly what the Bible says that "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34) and that Jesus is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9). Steve's expressed attitude here is the fruit of the "once saved always saved" doctrine. A Christian really doesn't have to obey God (Matthew 7:21); he can just live any old way he wants to. I wonder if Steve believes that a Christian can quit abiding in the teaching of Christ (the truth of the gospel, Galatians 2:14) as Peter did and not have God (II John verse 9), but still be saved?

Next, Steve wants to know if a Christian commits willful sin, will he lose his salvation? Hebrews 10:26 answers Steve's question precisely by saying "if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

Steve asked about what a Christian must do in order to receive forgiveness for his sins. Acts 8:22 and I John 1:9 answer this question, and they do not state that a once born again Christian needs to be born again again. The scriptures teach he doesn't need to be re-baptized.



Steve presents what he feels is a dilemma about a Christian sinning fifteen times and then Steve presents a solution to the dilemma. He gives no proof for the validity of his solution, but only asserts it is so. Evidently he feels the Bible solution is too hard, therefore he must make up his own solution. God's solution is that we must repent of our sins in order to be forgiven of them (Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30, Acts 2:38, 8:22). Is there anything unclear about those four passages?

Steve wonders about the possibility of "re-election" if my position is true, but all I have to do is call the reader's attention to II Peter 1:10 which reads, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure ...." If we can't lose our election, then that verse makes no sense whatsoever.

Steve asserts that II Corinthians 13:5 teaches his position, but it teaches the very opposite. Why would a Christian need to "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" if it is impossible to lose your faith once you have it? Hebrews 3:12 explicitly says that a brother can change and become an unbeliever, "departing from the living God." You see, this subject is not hard to understand. The Bible is simple and plain on the matter.

I replied in detail to Colossians 1:23 and I John 2:19 in my last article, so there is no need to repeat myself since Steve chose not to respond to my replies. We agree with Steve on Matthew 7:23 that counterfeit Christians were never saved to begin with.

Steve refers to the seal of the Holy Spirit that God gives faithful Christians, but fails to recognize that a seal can be broken (Matthew 27:66ff). Steve ignored my point on Jude verse 21 which reads, "Keep yourselves in the love of God

....” This shows God’s seal can be broken if we want out. God does not force us to love Him.

Steve responds to I Corinthians 9:25-27 but ignores the main point, that Paul recognized that if he didn’t live the Christ-like life, he would become a “reprobate” (rejected by God).

On an altogether different issue, Steve asserts that Cornelius was saved before he was baptized in water, but the text never says or implies that. I wonder if Steve thinks that Saul was saved in I Samuel 19 while he was plotting to kill God’s anointed David, simply because Saul had a miraculous measure of the Spirit?

Steve asserts that if a brother loses his salvation he would not be a “brother” anymore, but it is only assertion. We gave many passages in my last affirmative that clearly show this assertion is incorrect. Steve’s response to those passages was basically that when the Bible calls a someone a brother, he might not really be a brother. This is tantamount to questioning the inspiration of the scriptures. Steve’s correctly points out that the Bible talks about false brethren, and men who are brethren because they are of the same Jewish race, but none of the proof texts I gave fit into either of those categories. The examples I gave of people who fell away are called “brother” in the sense of “brother in Christ.” Steve in effect says that God is not telling us the truth when he tells us these people are brethren. I urge the reader to accept what God says. He is never wrong. When God says someone is a brother (in Christ), God is right. It is easy to uphold the “once saved always saved” position or another other false position if you just say the Bible is wrong whenever it contradicts your position. That is the tact that Steve has chosen to take.

On the question of do we presently possess eternal life, I agree with the Bible that we do (John 3:36), and I disagree with the quotes you supplied from Walter Scott, M.H. Tucker, and Tom Warren on this detail. Like I said in my last article, “eternal” and “un-lose-able” are two different concepts.

Steve now admits that his argument on “faith” in Acts 8:13 was incorrect, but still holds to his position on the passage by ignoring my argument on the word “also” in the verse. Go back and read what I said. The word “also proves Simon was saved just like the other Samaritans. And Steve already agrees with the rest of the passage (verses 20-23) which teaches that Simon was subsequently lost. Saved, then lost; Simon proves my position on this issue.

## **Galatians 5:4**

Back to my original arguments, Steve admits that Galatians 5:4 is referring to Christians, but he evidently thinks such a Christian can be saved even though “Christ shall profit him nothing.” I am amazed that someone who believes the Bible can think that a person can be saved without benefiting from Christ and His death.

## **Revelation 3:5**

Revelation 3:5 clearly shows it is possible for a person’s name to be erased from the book of life, which would have to mean a saved person losing his salvation, but for whatever reason, many will just not accept this plain teaching.

## **James 5:19-20**

Steve's answer to James 5:19-20 is that the people who erred from the truth here and potentially lost their soul to death were not really brethren. Again that is equivalent to rejecting the inspiration of the scriptures because the Bible says they were brethren. It doesn't say they were false brethren and Steve would admit it is not talking about brethren in the sense of nationality, but they were brethren in Christ. We human beings might assume someone is a brother and not know for sure, but God wrote this. He knows. He doesn't have to assume or guess. And he says such a brother can possibly err from the truth and lose his soul. I believe what James 5:19-20 says because the Bible is inerrant.

## **I Corinthians 8:11**

I beg the reader to accept what God says in I Corinthians 8:11. A brother (God said he was a brother, and God should know) can perish (be "condemned" according to the parallel verse, Rom 14:23).

## **II Peter 2:20-22**

Look with an open mind at II Peter 2:20-22. If someone has "escaped the sins of the world through the knowledge of the Lord," wouldn't you say that would have to be a person who has become a Christian? But if that same person turns back to the worldly life and God says his fate is worse than one who was never saved to begin with, isn't it clear that Christian is now lost again?

## **II Peter 1:9-11**

II Peter 1:9 is talking about a person who was "purged from his old sin." But Steve said this text is talking about a person who was never saved to begin with. Isn't this another case

where Steve is saying that God is wrong? Consider this picture of Steve arguing with God. God first says a certain person was “purged from his old sins.” Steve respectfully says to God, “you are mistaken, you just thought they were purged from their sins.” God replies .... How do you think God would reply to Steve? Verses 10-11 go on to present the possibility that this person would fall and lose his entrance into the everlasting kingdom if he doesn’t put on (live) what we call the “Christian graces.”

## **Hebrews 3:12**

I repeat my question, if God himself says the people of Hebrews 3:12 were “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling” (verse 1), just why doesn’t Steve believe it is really so? Doesn’t Steve believe that God wrote the Bible? Please answer for us Steve. And, just like it is impossible to depart from Atlanta if you never were there to begin with, it is impossible to “depart from the living God” if you never were with Him (saved) to begin with.

## **John 15:2,6**

I ask Steve again in regard to John 15:2-6, can a person be “clean through the word,” if he has not really become a Christian? Since when are non-Christians clean from their sin? And since when are counterfeit Christians “in Christ” as this passage depicts?

## **I Timothy 5:12**

In I Timothy 5 Paul is discussing a group of widows among the Christians that would be specially cared for benevolently. Paul’s instruction goes further to say that the younger widows should not be taken into this number. His reason is that they should marry (verse 14) lest they “wax wanton

against (turn away from) Christ ... Having condemnation (the KJV uses a stronger word here), because they have cast off their first faith. These young widows were clearly Christians, but Paul recognized the possibility that they might cast off their faith and be condemned. Clearly it is possible then for a Christian to lose her faith and be lost.

## Luke 8:13

We are presented the possibility in Luke 8:13 that someone can become a believer, and in time of temptation “fall away.” It won’t do for Steve to respond that these people never really believed or had a false/pretended belief; God said that they did believe. And we can be 100% sure He is right about it. Furthermore, their falling away proves the same can happen to any Christian today. Verses like this are why I take the position I do in this debate. It is much easier just to believe what the texts clearly say than to work and work to avoid their plain meaning.

## Conclusion

The reader should consider again the following question: Who in this debate is just accepting the plain meaning of the Biblical texts, and who is working real hard to explain away (get around) their plain meaning? Steve concludes his article by saying about me, “If a person’s theology has no place for a Christian being born again and being transformed when they believe ....” Not only do I believe that a Christian is someone who is born again and transformed, I believe that he must be transformed. Steve’s position is that being transformed into a new creature is optional.

Steve Morrison / Patrick Donahue Debate – Once Saved Always Saved – 2005

Article 6 – Morrison’s Third Negative

# Steve Morrison's Third Rebuttal Supporting Once-Saved- Always-Saved

**But can even French fries send a Christian to Hell?** The key issue here is: does a genuine Christian, who commits even the smallest willful sin (such as eating more than they know they should), lose their salvation and bound for Hell until they repent? I say "no". Patrick incredibly says "yes". Patrick has based his view in part on Hebrews 10:26-31.

However, if Hebrews 10:26-31 referred to any willful sin at all, it sinks his case, because for those who sinned in this way it says, "**no sacrifice for sins is left**". Rather, these verses refer to apostasy; those who received the gospel, were a part of the church for a while, but fell away and trusted something else, such as Judaism, for their salvation.

I am surprised that Patrick and I agree on "once-transformed-always-transformed" though. He and I both say there is no "born-again again". He is mistaken to state I believe transformation is optional. I believe all who are truly born-again will persevere and go to Heaven; Patrick believes they can lose their salvation, for any sin, and go to Hell even though they were born again. Or, they can repent, and get salvation back, without being regenerated/transformed again. Patrick made some incorrect statements about me; trying to paint me with the "cheap grace" view. However, a) cheap grace, and b) regenerated, born-again people in Hell, are not the only two options; both are wrong. Re-read my

first rebuttal where I stand against cheap grace; I hold to the “perseverance of the saints” view.

Patrick was wrong and uncharitable to claim I don't believe God is no respecter of persons, or to claim that I think we do not have to obey Jesus, or God, etc. As I have stated in my first rebuttal, “We strive hard for Christ (Romans 12:11-12), to be more holy and Christlike (1 Peter 1:16; Ephesians 5:1), not to earn the right to keep salvation, but for love of God (Romans 12:1-2),...”. I specifically rejected the “cheap grace” view, and yet you asserted my express attitude is “he can live just any old way he wants to.” Patrick if you deliberately misrepresented my view, that is a sin. Now according to my understanding of your theology, you just lost your salvation, and, if so, you would think you are going to Hell. According to my understanding of your theology, now that you know this, you should immediately try to get your salvation back right away. Then you can have confidence in your salvation, at least until next week if you say any careless words (Matthew 12:36), have unChristlike attitudes, or like Peter, hypocritically skip eating with someone. Now I forgive you, and I do not claim to be sinless either, but the issue here is understanding the “no confidence” viewpoint Patrick affirms. It is wrong because

- a) Many scriptures deny it (Romans 8:28-35,38-39; Ephesians 1:4-7,13-14, etc.)
- b) It cannot be held consistently (as I showed in my second rebuttal)
- c) It is not needed as the only check against living-as-you-please, when one understands the warnings against counterfeit conversion, i.e. receiving the gospel but still ending up in Hell.

So while Patrick denies “once-saved-always-saved”, he is at least part way there, because he believes in “once-



transformed-always-transformed". So then our disagreement becomes "are some people in Hell who were and still are born-again, transformed, and regenerated." Now Patrick, I sincerely think I have presented what your view accurately; however, I this view is so strange (to me) that I admit it is possible I could have misunderstood what you were saying. So please correct anything here where I misrepresented your view. Here is a summary of my view: **genuine Christians still sin; we need God's continuing grace, and with it we will repent and persevere.**

On John 3:36, thank you for correcting what I thought you might have believed about those teachers' words. You do affirm we have eternal (though not unlosable) life. Patrick, you and I then agree that Church of Christ teachers Walter Scott, M.H. Tucker, and Tom Warren are all wrong on saying we only have "eternal life in prospect", etc.

## **Perseverance Fits with Every Verse Brought Up**

I thought I showed how all the verses you mentioned fit into the doctrine of perseverance. But looking back I see that I missed some, plus you brought up some new ones. Here are answers for verses I missed, plus more explanation on others.

In reply on **Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; Acts 2:38; 8:22;** yes, not only do Christians need to repent of their sins, but all those who will ultimately go to heaven (whom I call genuine believers) will repent of their sins. Up to this point we agree. But we disagree where I say they are not going to Hell between the time they have sinned and the time they are aware of their sin and also repented.

In reply on **Colossians 1:23**, I already explained myself in the first rebuttal para:7, but I will be happy to do so again. Colossians 1:22-23 tells of promises in Christ of reconciliation, 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." Patrick and I agree that a person could intellectually believe, fail in the "if" clause and be eternally lost. Patrick sees that this means a person could be a genuine, heaven-bound believer, and then lose his salvation. He can see no other way. I say this correlation shows the result of the elect being ultimately heaven-bound, not cause. Patrick asserts this teaches the opposite of "The genuine elect will persevere, if they are the genuine elect." Patrick, you have dodged or ignored the verses I brought up about foreknowledge and election. Even after three affirmatives, I (and presumably the readers), still do not see where God's certain foreknowledge and predestination fit in your theology, if at all. You have no basis for saying this verse teaches the opposite of the genuine elect will persevere, if never affirm what you think "elect" means. Otherwise, your "affirmative" is only a disguised denial of God's election.

**Genesis 3:22-24** and **1 Corinthians 15:22** do not say what Patrick claims. It never states they had "eternal physical life", only that the day they eat of the fruit they would die. Of course Adam and Eve had a different experience from us too, so that is not relevant to losing salvation, if they were never told they had eternal life like we have.

**1 Samuel 19** The Spirit would leave in Old Testament times, but He is a seal guaranteeing our salvation in New Testament times. (Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:29-33)

**Joshua 6:2-21; 24:13** may be a metaphor for God's promise and our working out that promise, but it does not refer to loss of salvation. Pat is teaching "stay saved by works here".

**Matthew 27:66ff** A seal of man that is broken by God does not prove we can break God's seal over us of the Holy Spirit.

**Luke 8:13** says people believed but fell away. They believed intellectually, but were never saved (i.e. God's elect in the first place). They were never good soil that became bad; they were always rocky soil. Rather Luke 8:15 says good soil persevered.

We agree that **John 3:16; Acts 10:43; 16:31; Romans 10:9-10**, refer to a saving faith, a belief that is not just intellectual, but also desires to obey Christ as Lord of their life.

Pat's interpretation of **Romans 6:23** starts to make me question if he understands the heart of the gospel. The wages of sin is death for everyone, sinner and saint, but let's not forget the last half of the verse: the gift of God is eternal life. Even a repentant sinner still has that "wage" that needs to be paid. That wage is not paid by our works, our repentance, our faith, or our obedience. The one and only way that wage was paid was at the cross by Jesus. Either Pat is thinking those who have accepted the gift have to do some sort of wage to earn staying saved (which sounds really against God's grace), or else ... (Pat help me out here!)

Please re-read **Galatians 2:14**. It does not say, much less prove, that since Peter was not at that moment acting in line with the truth of the gospel, he was going to Hell.

In affirmative 2 Para:2 Patrick says "So having to meet conditions does not negate the fact that God gives us

something, 'by grace through faith' (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). Patrick, it does negate every condition that can be considered a work. The first three words of Ephesians 2:9 are "not by works".

**1 Timothy 5:12** Judgment on a believer does not mean loss of salvation.

**Hebrews 5:9** Obedience is a sign of those saved, obedience (i.e. works) do not get us saved. Pat is teaching salvation by works here.

**2 Peter 1:10** has no mention of re-election, or losing election. It only says to make sure what we have is genuine.

**2 John 9** says that "anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God." We agree these people are lost. However, Peter never stopped abiding in the doctrine of Christ. While Peter's not eating with Gentiles was "...not acting in line with the truth of the gospel..." (Galatians 2:14) does not mean he was running ahead and not continuing in the teaching of Christ; only that he was sinning. A Christian can still commit a sin and be a Christian going to heaven.

**Jude 21** - has two applications: watch out that your walk is close, and also that your salvation is not counterfeit.

**Revelation 2:9-10** Yes it is salvation that is given, but there is no mention of anything taken away.

## Conclusion

So Patrick, do I want you to change to think that once a person believes, he has it “made in the shade” and can live any way he wants to? – NOT AT ALL! Obedience is a result of genuine salvation, not a work of continued salvation. Do not misrepresent “perseverance” as “cheap grace”. Perseverance affirms our responsibility to continue to obey all our lives, and agrees that those who believed and obeyed but later forsake Christ are lost. Cheap grace does not.

Patrick, I do not want to accept the plain meaning of merely some Biblical texts. I want to accept the meaning of all Biblical texts, and if your theological interpretation cannot reconcile all the Bible verses on that topic, then your theological position needs to change. You need to sit down and deal with the Biblical verses on assurance, foreknowledge, and predestination also, and not be only repeat the good verses stressing our responsibility that you ignore the verses that give the other side of the balance. You might start with Ephesians 1:4,11,14; 3:12; Titus 1:2; Romans 8:28-30; 9:22-23; Matthew 22:14; Romans 8:31-38.

Patrick, you do not understand the context of Hebrews, so you have not given an affirmative for a consistent, livable position: losing and regaining your salvation perhaps 10 to 100 times a week when you willfully sin, in any way, is not credible or consistent with the assurance given in the Bible.

For those of us who ought to lose a few pounds (including myself), lay off those French fries because of love and obedience to Christ. But don't think that eating French fries will send a Christian to Hell.

Steve Morrison / Patrick Donahue Debate – Once Saved Always Saved – 2005

Article 7 – Donahue's Fourth Affirmative

# Patrick Donahue's Fourth Affirmative Against "Once Saved Always Saved"

Steve begins his third rebuttal by talking about french fries being the "key issue." But I can better state the key issue this way: since Steve agrees "genuine Christians still sin," then it could be any sin, from murder, to rape, to homosexuality. It's hard to imagine, but "once saved always saved" advocates believe it is possible for a truly "born again" Christian to homosexually rape a little boy and then murder the boy to cover the crime, and still be in a saved relationship with God the whole time he is committing the acts. Yes, I would certainly call that "cheap grace." But it is not important what I would call it. It only matters that God contradicts it when He says that sin separates us from Him (Isaiah 59:2, Romans 6:23). The Bible makes it clear that unrepentant homosexuals are lost (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

Steve asserts that I believe in once-transformed-always-transformed, but nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible states clearly in Hebrews 3:12 that a brother in Christ can change his belief to unbelief and depart from God. Read it for yourself. A believer doesn't suddenly lose his free will. It is possible for him to choose to forsake the Lord.

Joshua 6:2-21,24:13 proves beyond any doubt that having to meet conditions in order to receive a blessing from God does

not negate the fact that the blessing was unearned, given by grace through faith. Whether you call those conditions works or not makes no difference, because Ephesians 2:8-9 is discussing the earning basis of our salvation, not whether or not our salvation is conditional (as James 2:24 is discussing).

Steve briefly changed the subject to water baptism in his second article when he claimed the fact that Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized proves that he was saved without baptism. I proved Steve wrong by bringing up an unsaved Saul receiving the Holy Spirit in I Samuel 19. Steve's reply was to switch the subject back to once-saved-always-saved without addressing my response to him on his water baptism point. Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 22:16, and I Peter 3:21 prove that water baptism is necessary to salvation. Please read these verses and believe what they say. They are very clear.

Steve's response to II Peter 1:10 is inadequate. No matter how you slice it and dice it, a command for us to make our calling and election sure would imply that our election is not sure unless we make it so.

Steve's response to I Timothy 5:12 was "Judgment on a believer does not mean loss of salvation." But the Bible doesn't just say the believers of I Timothy 5:12 would receive judgment; it says they would have "condemnation" (the strongest word used in the Bible to describe someone who is lost). Does the reader believe a person can be both condemned and saved at the same time?

Steve admits now that the crown in Revelation 2:10 refers to salvation, but says that crown/salvation was never lost. Just taking language at face value, if this verse says "be thou faithful unto death and you will be saved," that would mean

that if a Christian does not remain faithful unto death, they won't be saved. It is that simple Steve.

## Steve's Proof Texts

If anyone can prove God will not allow His Ephesians 1:13-14 Holy Spirit seal to be broken by the one sealed, then please do so. Otherwise you are only assuming what you are supposed to be proving. Jude 21 makes it clear that we have a part in the "maintenance" of that seal. Jude 21 also refutes Steve's use of Romans 8:31-39. Nothing (except ourselves, Jude 21) can separate us from the love of God. And Romans 8:28-30 does nothing for Steve's position. Justification happens to a person when they initially become a Christian. The passage says nothing about whether such a person can lose his justification.

Ephesians 1:4 agrees with my position that God hath chosen from the very beginning that people will have to be "holy and without blame before him in love" to be part of the saved, and therefore also refutes what I think is Steve's point from Romans 9:22-23 and Matthew 22:14. And Titus 1:2 proves my position when it says Christians have "hope of eternal life," showing it is possible for a Christian to lose the eternal life he possesses. There is obviously no need to "hope" for a result if that result is already 100% settled.

The prevailing tactic of Steve's responses to my proof texts has been to, in effect, deny the inerrancy of the scriptures by saying a particular passage wasn't really talking about brethren, even though "brethren" was specified by the passage. We can prove anything by the Bible if we are allowed to disregard what the texts actually say.



But I must keep this article short. The following verses so clearly teach against once saved always saved - they speak for themselves. If we love God, we will be willing to accept what they plainly say, instead of working to try to get around what they say.

## **Galatians 5:4**

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; YE ARE FALLEN FROM GRACE.

## **Revelation 3:5**

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not BLOT OUT HIS NAME OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE ...

## **James 5:19-20**

BRETHREN, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall SAVE A SOUL FROM DEATH, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

## **I Corinthians 8:11**

And through thy knowledge shall the weak BROTHER PERISH, for whom Christ died?

## **II Peter 2:20-22**

For if after they have ESCAPED the pollutions (defilements, ASV) of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the LATTER END IS WORSE with them than the beginning.

## **II Peter 1:9-11**

... And hath forgotten that he was PURGED FROM HIS OLD SINS ... for IF ye do these things, ye shall never FALL.

## **Hebrews 3:12**

Take heed, BRETHREN lest there be in any of you an EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF, in DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD.

## **I Corinthians 9:25-27 (ASV)**

... Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible ... but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be REJECTED.

## **Conclusion (I can use extremes as well as Steve can)**

Because I believe exactly what God says over John Calvin's system, Steve questions if I understand the "heart of the gospel." The very opposite is true. Anybody who would believe it is possible for a true Christian to still be in a saved relationship with God even at the very moment he is having sexual intercourse with an animal, doesn't have a clue about what it means to make Jesus Lord of our life (Luke 6:46). II Corinthians 5:10 reads "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Revelation 20:12-13 says twice that every man will be judged "according to their works." These passages reflect precisely my position in this debate. Steve Morrison / Patrick Donahue Debate – Once Saved Always Saved – 2005

Article 8 – Morrison's Fourth Negative

# Steve Morrison's Fourth Rebuttal Supporting Once-Saved- Always-Saved

Due to space, I'll just discuss three points, and on the third an expert in perseverance helped me.

**Once...-always-...** Patrick says he denies once-transformed-always-transformed, yet Patrick's Third Affirmative, paragraph 3 says, "[Acts 8:22 and 1 John 1:9] do not state that a once born again Christian needs to be born again again. The scriptures teach he doesn't need to be rebaptized."

Not born again again means once-born-again-always-born-again

No water rebaptism means once-baptized-always-baptized (I think we agree on both of these)

A consequence of Patrick's belief is that "un-transformed" (and un-regenerated?) people in Hell are still born again of God!

Patrick, if you deny once-transformed-always-transformed, then it would seem sinners do not have to get born again to be saved, on subsequent times, or if they have a rapidly fluctuating transformation/un-transformation cycle.

How can your view be consistent with 1 John 3:9? "No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him, he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God." (NIV). See also 1 John 2:29. "cannot go on sinning" not a result of staying transformed, but a result

of “is born of God”. Future action is evidence of present state.

Ephesians 1:4 does not merely mean Christians must be holy. It states we were chosen. You asked for proof that a person cannot break the seal themselves. Ephesians 1:13-14 says the seal is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance. Who can separate us from the love of God? Romans 8:35 says nobody, implying not even us.

**Either...Or???** Let’s look again at the two cases: Patrick’s gross sin case, and my French fry case. While French fries is just one example, my point equally applies to other willful sins, such as watching too much TV, listening to music that glorifies wickedness, spending too much time playing video games, etc. In Patrick’s theology a single one of these sends one to Hell, unless they repent. And Pat does not deny in his view a French fry could send someone to Hell. His only response is attacking cheap grace and falsely trying to link my view to cheap grace.

Gross sin case: I concur that Patrick’s side of the key issue is epitomized by his quote: “It’s hard to imagine, but ‘once saved always saved’ advocates believe it is possible for a truly ‘born again’ Christian to [do various extremely terrible, wicked sins], and still be in a saved relationship with God the whole time he is committing the acts.” While I agree with Patrick that those who do not repent, be it from homosexuality, murder, etc. in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 are eternally lost, I was somewhat baffled why after all these papers Patrick states I don’t.

French fry case: Let me repeat part of Patrick’s quote, with one substitution: “It’s hard to imagine, but ‘once saved always saved’ advocates believe it is possible for a truly

‘born again’ Christian to willfully disobey and eat French fries, and still be in a saved relationship with God the whole time he is committing the acts.”

But if you affirm the second case [Patrick has not], does that mean you must affirm the first also?

- certainly not. There’s a Biblical way, denying the first and affirming the second. Christians have termed this ‘perseverance’, though the original writer used ‘remained’. I don’t think I can give a more succinct definition than his: “They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.” 1 John 2:19 (NIV).

**Perseverance:** For the rest of this, I enlisted the help of an expert on perseverance: the beloved Apostle John. 1 John 1:8-2:1 shows even as children of God we are not without sin. Those who are born again will still sin, but they will repent and persevere in the faith. Perseverance affirms, not denies, the essential truth that true Christians will walk in the light (1 John 1:6-7;2:3-6,9-11). We have an assurance of anointing (1 John 2:20), and it remains in us (1 John 2:27). But we also are responsible to see that what we have heard remains in us, that we remain in the Son and in the Father (1 John 2:24,27f). For someone who committed such gross sins as Patrick mentioned, one doubts they were ever saved. Perseverance says that those who believe, even if they are cleaned-up from some sins for a while, but return permanently to their sins, are going to Hell. Absent from John is anything saying works or obedience make us stay saved. But, frequently in John is a different concept that some might have confused with this: “We is how we know we are children of God: by loving God and carrying out his

commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. ..." (1 John 5:2-4a NIV). By understanding perseverance, we can agree to reject Patrick's gross sin case, and still affirm a French fry does not send you to Hell.

After all these papers, Patrick still tries to paint me as affirming cheap grace and his gross sin case. I was at a loss at to why. But perhaps now I might see; Patrick genuinely misunderstands. I surmise that Patrick is asking "what is the standard of righteousness required to stay saved?" Cheap grace and perseverance both give none. Patrick's "any-willful-sin" standard looks OK for gross sins, but I proved his standard ludicrous for every single willful sin. (Do you want fries with that?)

Perseverance does have a standard for staying saved, but Patrick fails to grasp it, because it's not righteousness-based. But John gives both the standard and evidence of it.

The standard: knowing God (1 John 2:3a,4a; 2:13a,c; 14:a; 3:1:b; 3:6; 4:7,8), being in the light (1 John 2:9), having their sins forgiven (1 John 2:12), overcoming the evil one (1 John 2:13b,14c), living through God (1 John 4:9); God and His Word lives in us (1 John 1:4b;3:24;4:12,13,15,16b), living in God (1 John 3:24;4:13,15,16b), fellowship with God (1 John 1:6), being born of God (2:29; 3:9a,c; 4:7;5:4,18), children of God (1 John 3:1,10;5:19,21), the love of God in him (1 John 2:5,15;3:17b), having the Son (1 John 5:12), anointing from the Holy One (1 John 2:20,27), the Spirit God gave us (1 John 3:24c).

Evidence of possessing the standard is obeying God's commands (1 John 2:3-4;5:3-5), walking as Jesus (1 John 2:6),

love not hating our brother (1 John 2:9-11;3:15,17,23b;4:7-8,20-21), not loving the world (1 John 2:15-16), believing in Jesus who came in the flesh (1 John 3:23a;4:2;5:1,10,13), not keep on sinning (1 John 3:6;5:18), doing what is right (1 John 2:29), overcoming the world (1 John 5:4-5), do what is right pleases Him (1 John 3:10;3:22b). Notice that 1 John 3:11-24 and the 36 other times John uses the word “know” do NOT tell how to get saved; rather how to know we’re saved.

1 John 3:6 (also 3:10;5:18) differentiate both the standard (God making you His child) and its evidence: “No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.” (NIV)

That being said, and being confident of God’s grace and able to know I have eternal life (1 John 5:13-14), I could go and have some French fries. But on second thought, since I love God and want to please Him - hold the fries.