

**A CONFIDENT FAITH FOR CONTROVERSIAL TIMES**

10. "Here's A Warning to Careless Listeners!"

**Scripture:** Hebrews 6:1 - 12

**Theme:** Continual unbelief and disobedience results in lack of assurance for salvation and of fellowship with God."

**Introduction**

There are perhaps no other verses in scripture that have created more debate and argument than those we are about to consider. Over the years four main interpretations of this sixth chapter have been suggested:

1. They are addressed to Jews who have professed Christ but who have stopped short of having true faith.
2. They are speaking to believers who had fallen into sin and who are being warned of losing their reward if they continue in this behavior and attitude.
3. They refer to believers who have fallen into unbelief and have lost their salvation.
4. The writer is stating a hypothetical case in which he demonstrates the foolishness of their behavior which advocates "hold on," rather than teaching them to "go on."

As you study this section, you need to ask yourself. Is the writer saying that an unbeliever has only one chance to receive Christ in his life? Are there certain sins or doubts that God will not tolerate? If so, what are they? It is possible for born again believers to "fall away" in the sense of losing their restoration, after having sinned? What kind of sin, doubt or behavior would be unforgivable?

I, personally, tend to lean more to the fourth interpretation. I believe that the writer's focus is on the phrase "to restore them to repentance." The writer has just emphasized that these believers must "leave the elementary doctrines of Christ" (6:1). Quit going back by trying to lay the "foundations of the faith" again, he is saying – which means you can't go back to the repentance, as in conversion, to be restored to fellowship. That is impossible. Instead, "Go on," the writer insists, "Build on the foundation of Jesus Christ because it is secure. So He's asking his readers to imagine that if the Foundation is as insecure as they have been treating it, it then certainly restoration would be impossible. Let's suppose someone could "fall away" and be lost after coming to Christ, how could he possibly get saved again? Would he have to crucify Jesus all over again? To move on to maturity is not a matter of trying to become born again, it is a matter of approaching the throne of grace of Christ, as our High Priest, "that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in times of need." (Heb. 4:16).

Now I invite you to do some digging on your own and see what conclusions you come up with.

**I. The Challenge to All Christians** (Heb. 5:11 – 6:3)

1. What challenge does the writer give to his readers described at the end of chapter 5?
  
2. What practical instruction is given in 6:1?
  - The verb in the expression “let us go on” is in the passive voice (the same as in II Peter 1:21). The writer, actually is saying, “Let us be borne along” to maturity. How does this fact influence the interpretation of that phrase?
  
  - How can we yield to the power of God? (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 3:20 – 21)
  
3. What sobering and necessary reality does the writer recognize in 6:3?

## **II. The Caution to Careless Christians (Heb 6:4 – 8)**

1. What does the writer warn of that is “impossible?” (Vs. 4 – 6).
  - To what experience is he referring? ((vs. 1, 6).
  
2. What five phrases distinguish those who are tempted to fall? (4:4 – 5). List and explain!
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3. To what experience does each phrase refer? What does it mean: “To taste?”

- What is the real issue the writer is addressing: Salvation? Usefulness? Rewards? Restoration is not about conversion? Other?
4. How do Jesus' words in Matt.10:32 – 39 add to this discussion?
- How does looking at the behavior of Peter in Matt 26:69 – 75; Jn. 21:15 – 19 impact this discussion?
5. What are maturing, committed Christians like? (Vs. 6:6).
- What does it mean “to fall away” or “to commit apostasy?” Does fall away refer to loss of salvation or loss of fellowship?
  - How could you interpret 6:8 in light of I Cor 3:10 – 15?
  - What might the “it” in 6:8, refer to?

### **III. The Confidence of Faithful Christians** (vs. 6:9 – 12).

1. Notice the shift of tone in verse 9 by the writer. How does he now address his readers?
- Why do you suppose this expression of love would come particularly at this point in this letter?
  - Why are we often most stern with those we love?

2. Why does the writer have confidence concerning those to whom he is writing? (Vs. 6:9 – 10).
  
3. Consider the importance of the expression “each of you” (vs. 11). Why must Christians never treat each other as part of the masses, but rather as persons?
  - What does the writer desire for each one?
  
5. In verses 10 -12, what do you understand to be the concern of the writer for his readers?
  - To what are they encouraged?
  
  - Against what are they warned?
  
5. How is the faith and patience of others who have succeeded spiritually both an encouragement and a pattern for us?

### **Application**

1. How have you grown since you first became a Christian?
  
2. How does it disgrace Christ when you or other Christians fall back into your old way of life?