

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders: make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

One of the stumbling blocks to an effective witness can occur when the client sees no danger spiritually to continuing in sin. According to those who have counselled at the Pregnancy Counseling Center, one element in this nonchalant attitude toward sin is the belief that "once you are saved, you are always saved," a teaching also known as the "Perseverance of the Saints." This teaching is basically a misapplication of beautiful gospel promises meant to assure the fearful heart of those who worry that they might lose their salvation. Those promises were never meant to cancel out the harsh reality that through our own sinfulness we can lose our salvation. Here are some passages that show us it is possible to lose our salvation:

Hebrews 3:7-4:1 - So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion ... That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'they shall never enter my rest'." See to it brothers that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." ... to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. Therefore ... let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.

Hebrews 6:4-6 - It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

Hebrews 10:26-31 - If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

1 Timothy 1:19 - [Fight the good fight] holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.

Luke 8:13-14 - "Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature."

Ezekiel 18:24 - But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die.

Colossians 1:22-23 - But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, 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. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Revelation 22:19 - God will take away from him his share in the tree of life, and in the holy city.

Exodus 32:32-33 - "But now, please forgive their sin--but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written." The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book."

2 Timothy 2:17-18 - Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.

2 Peter 2:20-22 - If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."