

Wasted Faith Discussion Guide

Chapter 8

Faith that Does Not Last

1. Read 1 Peter 1:3-9 aloud. Note verses 6-7. According to this passage, what two purposes do trials in the believer's life serve? Why does Peter say, "if necessary," or, "if need be," in verse 6? Can a trial in a believer's life turn him away from Christ? What illustrations do you have from your own life or from the lives of others you know that support your view?
2. Read chapter 8 in *Wasted Faith* aloud: "Faith That Does Not Last" (pp. 47-50).
3. Read aloud John 6:37-40. Describe in every way possible from this text exactly who will be raised up on the last day. Look at every aspect of the passage very carefully. Can you find any possible way that a person can lose his salvation given these verses?
4. Read John 10:27-30 aloud. In what ways does Satan attempt to snatch believers out of God's hand? What power would be necessary to actually snatch a believer out of God's hand?
5. Given the unarguable clarity of John 6:37-40, John 10:27-30, and 1 Peter 1:5 (the passages we just studied), how would you explain the meaning of Colossians 1:21-23 and Hebrews 3:12-4:1 (read these aloud)? What warning do these passages give to professing Christians who are being tempted toward unbelief or false forms of Christianity?
6. Why do you think the truth we have been discussing has been historically called "the preservation and perseverance of the saints (believers)"? How do the words "preservation" and "perseverance" work together? Which phrase is better: "once saved, always saved," or "once saved, always persevering"? Why?
7. Demas was an active worker in the gospel at first. Read Colossians 4:14, Philemon 24, and 2 Timothy 4:9-10, the only places where his name is mentioned. Perhaps we cannot know for sure, but in your estimation, was Demas a true believer? Peter denied Christ three times (John 18:15-18; 25-27). Is he any different than Demas? Explain.
8. Read 2 Peter 3:9 aloud. Who is Peter writing to in this verse (notice the pronouns surrounding the verse)? Now read Matthew 18:6 and 12-14. Note that the "little children" (which is a metaphor for adult believers as well) *believe* in the Lord in verse 6. It is reasonable to think that the "little children" in verse 14 are Christians of any age, not just children

who believe. What then is the meaning of verse fourteen? If you are a straying Christian, what will God do?

Now return to 2 Peter 3:9-18 and read it aloud. Notice again who Peter is talking to. The Christians in the passage were being led astray by false prophets (the message of the whole book) and needed to make their calling and election sure (see 1:10). Therefore they needed to repent so that they would not fall from their own steadfastness (vs. 17). It was God's will that they not perish (He never wills that believers perish), but that they "be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless (v.14). God's slowness about coming again gives the time to turn from sin; it is their salvation (deliverance, v. 15). Read 2 Peter 3:9 aloud again. For the sake of clarity, summarize the meaning of this verse together.

9. What explanation would you give for a person who begins as an apparent believer at a young age, has some immediate strong sense that her life is changed, but enters into rebellion for many years during youth and college days? Then, through some new experience of renewal, she seems to be in touch with God again for the rest of her life? Is such a person a believer? If so, when was she likely converted?

10. If a person is converted after what he always considered to be his baptism, should he be baptized now? (I realize that churches have varying views on this issue, yet the question often comes up and it is valid and important to discuss.)

11. If you have time remaining, read chapter 9 in *Wasted Faith*, "What Must I Do?" (pp. 51-57) before you pray.

Before the next meeting: Read chapter 9 in *Wasted Faith*, "What Must I Do?" on your own (pp. 51-57). Please read meditatively and prayerfully.