

Christians can be careless and neglectful and fail to progress into all that God has planned, purposed and provided for each believer. Yet, such a person is eternally secure for seven reasons:

1. Because of divine election (**Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:4; 2:10; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pt. 1:2**)
2. Because of the completeness of Christ's redemptive work (**Hebrews 1:3; 7:25; 10:10-14**)
3. Because salvation is of grace (**Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12-13; Titus 3:5**)
4. Because of the eternal nature of salvation (**John 3:16; 2 Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 9:12**)
5. Because of the clear promises of Scripture (**John 5:24; 6:37; 10:28-29; Philippians 1:6**)
6. Because of the believer's union with Christ (**Jn. 1:12-13; 15:5; Eph. 2:6; Col. 1:13**)
7. Because of the work of the Holy Spirit which is eternal (**Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30**)

Hebrews 2:1: "Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it."

- **Grammatical Usage:** "**attention**" or in the Greek, "prosechein" meaning, "heed"; "**drift away**" or "pararyōmen" meaning, "slip" consciously or unconsciously.
- **Literal Interpretation:** That is why it is necessary that we pay significant heed to the things which were heard, lest we ever slip consciously or unconsciously away from them.
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. It's not possible for a saved person to fall away and be lost but very possible for a person to fail to realize God's purpose in saving him/her. In connection with this the writer to the Hebrews gives seven warnings to Christians – that if they are careless and disobedient and do not go on to mature, two things will happen:

1. *They will incur God's discipline here and now* (**Hebrews 12:6-11**); compare **John 15:2** with **1 Corinthians 11:28-32**
2. *They will lose their reward later on* (**1 Corinthians 3:12-15**)

So what are the warnings, the specific dangers, which we face as Christians?

1. The danger of drifting like a ship without a rudder (Hebrews 2:1-3)

The picture is of a ship that has drifted past its moorings, and this is our danger. **V. 3** tells us how we drift: it is by sheer neglect of prayer, Bible study, soul-winning and so on; and one reason for this is that we become preoccupied with secondary and unimportant things in the light of eternity.

2. The danger of having an evil heart of unbelief (Hebrews 3:12-19; 4:1-2)

The danger of unbelief is the danger of not believing God, of not trusting Him, of failing to take Him at His word (**Hebrews 11:6**)! What is unbelief?

- A. It is like turning our back upon God (**3:12**)
- B. It is a dangerous sin, and sin is so deceitful (**3:13**)
- C. It leads to hardness of heart (**3:15**)
- D. It grieves God (**3:17-18**)
- E. It deprives us of blessing (**3:19**)

Now look at **Hebrews 4:1-2**. How easy to listen to the Word without the mixing of faith, and how often the Lord has to say to us, “**Where is your faith?**” (**Luke 8:25**)!

3. The danger of being content with spiritual immaturity

Hebrews 5:11-14; 6:1 show us that:

- A. Christians can be “**slow to learn**” (**5:11**)
- B. We should be teachers, but we are not learning (**5:12**)
- C. We are babies (**5:12-13**)
- D. We lack discernment (**5:14**)
- E. We should go on to maturity (**6:1; Ephesians 4:13-14**)

4. The danger of serious backsliding and the failure to repent

We see this in **Hebrews 6:4-10**. The writer is addressing Christians, for they have been “**enlightened...have tasted the heavenly gift,**” “**have shared in the Holy Spirit**” (all in **v. 4**); they “**having tasted the goodness of the word of God**” and “**the powers of the coming age**” (**v. 5**) – but these are Christians who have been backsliding. Notice **v. 6** does not refer to salvation but “**repentance**”. When a believer falls into sin and does not repent he is in danger of becoming one of God’s castaways (**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**); that is, he is not in danger of losing his salvation but he is disqualified for service and comes under God’s judgment – he is set aside. Perhaps he will become sick in body, or perhaps he will die, either way he will suffer loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ (**1 Corinthians 11:28-32**).

5. The danger of committing deliberate and willful sin (Hebrews 10:26-29)

This is not sin of ignorance but willful sin, and Christians are capable of this! Is there forgiveness for willful sin? Yes there is (**1 John 1:9**). But if we refuse to give up our sin and to repent, what then? What will God do? He will judge us, not with eternal judgment but with discipline in this life and loss of reward in the next. The danger that faces Christians is not that of losing their salvation but the danger of losing God’s best.

6. The danger of being careless and undisciplined (Hebrews 12:12-17)

We can get spiritually slack and discouraged (**v. 12**); how we need to be determined to go straight ahead in our Christian life (**v. 13**); to be peaceable and holy (**v. 14**); not to become resentful and bitter (**v. 15**); and **v. 16-17** tell us that if we go on like this, failing and falling in a careless and undisciplined way; chastening now and loss at the Judgment Seat will follow.

7. The danger of refusing to hear the Word of God (Hebrews 12:18-26)

God has spoken in two ways – first to Moses; this was the voice from Sinai (**vv. 18-21**); but second, He speaks to us now through Jesus to whom the Holy Spirit bears record, and our danger is shown in **v. 25**. Are you at any point refusing to hear His voice and to do His will?

These are some of the dangers we are warned about in **Hebrews** and which we, as Christians (as opposed to the unsaved) face. To heed them will make for progress, sanctification, maturity and usefulness; to ignore them will make for failure and fruitlessness, and this will bring the Lord’s chastening now, and when Jesus comes – shame and loss: **1 John 2:28**.

➤ **Conclusion:** Am I neglecting my salvation?

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