

Eternal Security of the Believer

Part 1: Introduction

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

Financial Testimony / Teaching on Offense, Shame, Hope, & Faith

Megan and I were living in a 550 sq. ft. 1 bedroom apartment with one toddler and another soon to be on the way. We went on our first date in a long time - we had an hour at Panera before Megan needed to get back to feed Peter. We go to Panera and Megan says “let’s talk about finances.” I’m thinking “this is not date material!”

If you know Megan - you know she is both so sweet and so strong. They used to call her Mighty Mouse. So, she so sweetly and yet so strongly said “we don’t make enough money.” The sweet part was that she was so honoring of my role as a teacher at the time - my great work there, my excellence there - so honoring. But she said “we don’t make enough money to buy a house” and we only had a 550 sq. ft. apartment.

I had a chance to become offended by that conversation but chose not to. One of the keys to combatting offense is to keep your mouth shut. Sometimes I follow that advise! If you are feeling offended, do not speak - except to God. Then you can negotiate with Him whether you have a right to operate out of offense towards another person in light of what He did for you on the Cross. That really helps me out.

I start to remember how He died for me while I was yet a sinner. I remember that willingly took all the consequences for all sin for all mankind for all time upon Himself and went to Hell for 3 days so that I would never have to go there ... and then He rose again, praise God! When I start comparing those things in my mind, it’s funny ... the offense starts to dissipate!

Brad taught us that offense is love’s greatest enemy. I believe that shame is intimacy’s greatest enemy. If you are dealing with shame in your life - if there are things that you are ashamed of - it is actually an intimacy killer. So, offense destroys love, but shame destroys intimacy. That’s a good word for married couples. Also a good word if you notice you are afraid of social situations - if parties are scary for you - that is an intimacy issue generally. Shame is what’s at the root of that. So go to the Lord because His love will take away the shame!

The other thing about shame is this ... you don't need to confess all of your sins to one another (unless of course you actually sin against someone ... then apologize to them!) But if you have something in your life that is so hidden that you've never talked to a brother or sister in Christ about it - just to get it out there - the shame can eat you about that thing. God can take care of the shame but there is still something to not feeling like you are hiding your entire life from other people. Not everyone needs to know about it, but to deal with the shame you might need to talk with someone else just to get it out there with them to and see that it is not only no shame with God, but also no shame with people - and they become a representative of God on this earth to show you how that looks.

Back to the story ... so I kept my mouth shut and didn't express any offense. Then I had an idea! You see, your breakthrough is often on the other side of offense! After I had resisted offense, I thought "why don't we add up what we would need to make to comfortably own a home." So we start adding it up and realize that it was 83% more than what we were currently making. For easy numbers (this was not the case as you can probably tell from us living in a 550 sq. ft. apartment) if we had been making \$100,000 we needed to start making \$183,000 to comfortably own a home.

Then I told Megan and said "why don't we pray that would be how much we make within 12 months?" So we grabbed hands and said "Father, in the Name of Jesus, we receive this salary amount within the next 12 months by faith in Jesus' Name." 12 months later I was offered 4x as much as I had expected to be offered for a certain contract (and multiple other things had happened that year), and it dawned on me "wait, when did we pray that prayer!?" I realized that was 12 months ago so I added up what we were going to be making the next year and it was 84% more than what we had been making when we prayed the prayer!

When we make declarations about finances, we need to remember that our God is able to exceedingly, abundantly above all that we ask, seek, or imagine. The righteous shall live by FAITH! This is a faith life! Faith is not whipped cream that is optional on your Starbucks drink. Faith IS the drink of the Christian life. Faith is the SUBSTANCE of things hoped for. We are supposed to be operating in faith because He is the God of all hope. He is always aboutding in hope and He wants you to abound in hope as you are filled with all joy and peace in believing! As you abound in hope He wants faith to access what you've hoped for! When we made the list of what we would need to make to comfortable own a home, that was HOPE that was working. Faith is when we grabbed hands and prayed for it in the Name of Jesus!

You have access by faith into all that Jesus has access to by obedience! Everything that Jesus did by obedience becomes what you have access to by faith. If you try to access those things by obedience, you will actually not access them. If the gateway to your prayer life is your obedience, you will not have a prayer life. The gateway to your prayer life is HIS obedience. If you find that you don't want

to pray, ask yourself if you are trusting in your flesh or are you trusting in what Jesus did on the Cross. Because if you are trusting in what Jesus did on the Cross it releases you right into His presence.

My friend Brian Orme says that all revelation comes from exploring your unity with the Father. Jesus said that Him and the Father are one and you are in Christ. So you can explore your unity with the Father. Ephesians 3 says that as we know the extent of God's love, we will find the knowledge of God - revelation. So as you meditate on the love of the Father and you explore the unity that you have with Him in Christ, you get revelation. He starts speaking to you and unlocks things in your heart.

So when we are talking about making financial declarations, I am trying to say that your life could change if you got in faith about finances. Our sequence has been from a one bedroom apartment to an 84% financial increase that allowed us to purchase a home! Then God did another financial work ... He got me out of the school system half time while keeping our finances at that same level! First it was more money and next it was more flexibility with the same amount of money! I started ministering in the Kingdom half-time and our finances stayed the same - that was another miracle. And do you know that He's done it again? Now I am not day-to-day in the school system at all and I am totally independent and flexible in all that I do and our finances went up again - they didn't just stay the same ... they went up again!

This is the walk. You go from glory to ... glory! Because the righteous shall live by faith. I want to encourage you in your finances. God wants breakthrough in your finances. I believe that it is a season of feasting that has come upon this body!

Fasting Follow-Up

Even the kids want to fast. We tell them they can only fast a snack but they want to fast. When we worship in front of kids they learn what it looks like to give God glory. When we fast in front of our kids they learn what it is to seek the Lord.

Prayer does something different than what the Word does. The Word does something different than what prayer does, and fasting does something different than either the Word or prayer does. People with a great prayer life but are weak in the Word can be flaky in the Spirit. People that are great in the Word but weak in prayer can be filled with truth but miss the pulse of God. Fasting does something different than the other two. That's why some things only come out by prayer AND fasting. You've got to put them together.

Mark Crawford says the key to breakthrough is follow-through. Here's what happens in the Spirit (football analogy). When you are the blazing fast running back and run a 50 yard break-out run, on the next play you may often get stuffed at the line of scrimmage and pilled on by the other team who

is still seething with anger over your recent big play. That's how breakthrough often works in the spirit. Huge breakthrough and then you get your face kicked in on the next play! I'm not saying always, I'm just saying often.

We fasted for 14 days and when I got done with this fast, I was excited to eat! I got food poisoning 3 days later at a restaurant in Cleveland. 5 days of food poisoning. I thought it was gone but on the 5th day I woke up and I still had food poisoning! That was so discouraging. I usually give Megan Monday morning off like I usually do by taking the kids out because I had to stay at the home! And then that night we had 3 bad things / bad news happen within 15 minutes! Crazy! Then we go out on our Monday night date and here we are getting sideways with each other for about 2 minutes. Luckily Megan was so sweet about it and came up and loved me.

Then we went to a restaurant and there was Bryan Mangerchine. God will always provide you a way out of every temptation. We had a temptation to despair - and when we saw Bryan, that despair lifted off of me because I knew that was NO COINCIDENCE. God had set that up! Just the fact that God had arranged that it so encouraged me that I told Megan "babe, we're good" and I started talking about Ephesians 6 at the table. Stand firm therefore in the evil day!

The enemy sends evil days on the tail-end of your breakthrough to try to get you to capitulate the ground that you actually just took. The key in the evil day is to take the 50 yard run and then if you happen to get smacked in the face and pilled on during the next play ... remember how we were getting pilled on that afternoon? The key for the evil day is to get up and act like you just had a 50 yard run - because you did! The enemy wants you to get all confused. Some attacks are more about creating confusion than anything else. It's not "so bad, so bad." Just make the next run go another 50 yards, or 10 yards, or 20 yards, or whatever! You actually just had a huge breakthrough so stand firm therefore in the evil day with the belt of truth fastened around your waist and your breastplate of righteousness firmly in place!

When you fast - when you have a breakthrough - you need to know that there is going to be opposition that comes and the whole thing the enemy is trying to do is to get your to capitulate your breakthrough.

Now one way you can cause that to not even happen is to make it a lifestyle! Megan and I are planning to fast with some regularity this year. Maybe one day a week or one day every other week. I've done something like that before and can tell you that it is a powerful practice to fast regularly.

Look, there are seasons where you may fast a lot and there may be seasons where you don't fast much at all. It might now be your season to fast - that's OK. But if you want to make fasting a lifestyle, just do it one day a week.

Have you ever pushed a car that's stalled out? It takes 3 guys to get it going, but once it's going you kind of just walk with it. You guys pushed through some inertia to get going at the beginning of this year. If you just kind of "walk with it" every week or two, you will actually keep all that momentum.

The Standard Positions on Eternal Security

There are basically two schools of thought / doctrinal camps as it relates to the eternal security of the believer. The first is that "once you're saved, you're always saved." That is what would be called the eternal security camp, but I just call it "once saved, always saved." There is another camp that says once you're saved you can become lost again - and usually they will say that would happen because you've sinned. So, their stance is that you could be saved, and then sin or walk away from God, and then you become lost again, and then if you re-dedicate your life or repent of those sins a certain way you become saved again, and then you become lost again if you sin, and then you become saved again.

Now, that second position sounds horrendous, but many believers think that way. In fact many believers that think that way will not say it in the way that I just said it. They will say it somehow much better sounding than that. They are not trying to be deceptive it's just that our hearts are deep waters and what we actually believe can be a little bit confusing.

These are the two basic camps. I am trying to make them really black and really white for your benefit. The once camp says "once saved, always saved." The other camp says "saved, lost, saved, lost" - you can lose your salvation. The camp that says "once saved, always saved" is basically the Calvinist camp. The "saved, lost, saved, lost" camp is basically the Arminian camp. There are some Arminians that say they don't really agree with "saved, lost, saved, lost" and some Arminians that even say they have more of a Calvinist view as it relates to eternal security. That said I read an article by an Arminian who said they don't really believe in "saved, lost, saved, lost" but push come to shove, the article I think shows that really IS what they believe. So while there is diversity in these two camps (as there is in any school of thought), basically those are the two camps. And if I can just boil it down, the two camps are either "once saved, always saved" or "saved, lost, saved, lost."

2 Ditches as it Relates to Talking about Doctrine

There are two ditches as it relates to talking about doctrine. The one ditch with doctrine is when a believer feels the need to constantly latch on to doctrines. The trouble with that is the Bible says (1 John 2) that you have NO NEED that anyone should teach you. The Bible also says that you have a Great High Priest - meaning that you have direct access to the throne of God. (Hebrews 6-10) Jesus said "don't call anyone on earth Father." (Mt. 23:19) The point is there are some believers who sort of

chase the doctrines that other men are putting out there - not believing they can have a direct-connect with God and read their Bibles for themselves. That's a ditch as it relates to doctrine.

There is another ditch on the other side of it. I've literally had someone tell me "I listen to no man" and to them, they meant "they read the Bible for themselves!" This is the other ditch! The Bible says (1 Cor. 14) that the spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets. If you have someone who thinks they are prophetic but they won't be mutually submissive, the Bible says to not recognize / promote / give stage to that person. In Acts 2, we see that they devoted themselves to the Apostles' doctrine. We even see later in Acts that PAUL OF ALL PEOPLE went to the elders and the apostles in Jerusalem to get doctrine that he then delivered to those different churches.

This is important. Wisdom that is from above is first peaceable and WILLING to yield. It doesn't mean that you have to yield, because Paul went to Peter one time and he recounts that he would not yield to Peter on this matter one bit - because Peter was siding with those who held that you had to obey the law in order to be right with God. Paul said "absolutely not! It's by grace, through faith, that's it!" Paul recounts that he WOULDN'T yield one inch, but his heart was willing to yield ... it's just that he was NOT to yield there!

So the wisdom that's from above is first peaceable but it is also willing to yield ... so when you have people who say "I listen to no man ... I read the Bible for myself" ... the trouble is they apparently don't listen to God about the part that wisdom that's from above is willing to yield.

There are these two ditches as it relates to doctrine. I want to highlight these because I'm about to say that while there are two general standpoints as it relates to eternal security, both of them are unscriptural. Then I am going to show you what scripture says and share the conclusion that took me 10 years to get!

So I want you to know my heart in this because you can get in this spot where you almost become anti-doctrine. That's not good. The believers devoted themselves to the doctrine of the Apostles, and Paul delivered to the churches the decrees to keep!

As I see it, there are two types of doctrines. There are the traditions of men: "*making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down.*" (Mk. 7:13) There is also understanding from Heaven! We like the second type of doctrine. (Note that there are also "doctrines of demons" that foretold in 1 Timothy 4:1 for the latter times which some will partner with by teaching abstinence from certain foods and forbidding marriage - for the end goal of causing some to depart from the faith by giving heed to those deceiving spirits speaking through these hypocritical, lying teachers.) But for our purposes here we can basically think of "traditions of men" and "revelation from heaven."

Be Patient with Doctrine

It's important whenever you are forming doctrine to be VERY PATIENT in your study. In my experience, issues with doctrine come from either having already heard a doctrine from others and thereby reading the Bible through that lens ... or having an impatience that says "I have to form my doctrine on this now ... I have to know what I think about _____."

Someone emailed me at the church and asked "what do you think about these two theological issues." I wrote back about eternal security (one of her questions) and her other question was about another commonly debated question of theology. My response to the second question was that "I don't have a definitive position" on it. Wait ... I'm a pastor; shouldn't I?! Shouldn't I go out and read everything that everything else has written to come up with definitive position? Maybe, maybe not.

Here's my story about the eternal security revelation. About 10 years ago as a newer believer I was walking with a friend who was mentoring me. He said "I'm a firm believer in Calvinism ..." I'm thinking "I don't know what that is." I'm a researcher so I thought "I'm going to go research it" but I felt the Spirit of the Lord say "no."

For years I would hear about Calvinism and Arminianism, and for years I felt like I keep hearing God tell me to not look them up. Do you know I was pastoring and I didn't know the difference between the two? I didn't feel bad about it ... the Holy Spirit kept telling me "no."

So at house church about 9 months ago, a guest was visiting and they really pressed about eternal security. After somewhat trying avoid getting into a long conversation about it ... but then the study I had been doing in the NT came together for me and I gave a quick answer that I felt the presence of God on what I said and I realized "that was it! That's what I actually believe from scripture about eternal security." Again, at this point I still didn't even know what Calvinism and Arminianism say.

Then we meet a believer who introduced himself as a Calvinist and said "I hope you still like me" since he knew I was a pastor. I said "man if I can't love my brother in Christ how can I possibly love my enemy!" That night I asked the Lord "can I look up Calvinism" and He said "yes, go ahead and look it up." I was thinking it would really help me to minister to this guy who had introduced himself as a Calvinist.

Well it turns out, I was like "wow, man, this is kind of crazy stuff about predestination." Calvinism is basically about predestination. In Romans 8 it says that those whom He foreknew, He predestined. Here's how that works: God exists outside of time and time exists inside of God. Because of that God has seen everything that's ever going to happen. Therefore, God foreknows everything that's going to happen. So, yes, God foreknew that you were going to receive the Lord. Those whom He foreknew,

He chose. So, knowing that you on your own freewill were going to receive the Lord, He chose you first! (Thanks to Kris Vallotton to teaching this some years ago).

Calvinism actually teaches that God chooses certain people only - the elect. That's a whole problem because the Bible says that He desires that every man should know Him - and Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, not just the sins of the elect. Then substantively, on the back end of Calvinism, there is really major issue which is "you had better not share the gospel with anyone because maybe they are not someone who is supposed to be saved!" If you were taught "only certain ones are desired by God to be saved" would that not put a trepidation in your step before you share the gospel? Don't just be leaving gospel tracts around ... who knows who could pick them up!

What Calvinism then says is "because God chose you apart from your freewill, how could you ever get un-chosen by God. God is not a man that He should lie so if He chose you ... you cannot be unchosen." In their view it was God's decree that got you saved and therefore it is His decree that is going to keep you saved no matter what you do. Your freewill was never involved in the equation. That is another major issue with Calvinism. That's why I gave you Romans 8 ... those whom He foreknew He predestined. "But it says predestined!" But it says that He foreknew what you were going to do!

God had to foreknow what you were going to do because He had to know all your sins and my sins before He put them on Jesus on the Cross! God's ways are higher than our ways. He exists outside of time. A day is as a thousand years to Him and a thousand years as a day. Time exists inside of God. Not that we can even wrap our minds around all of this, but that's the solution I believe to that verse from Romans 8 that troubles many.

But that's what happened ... God saw what you were going to do based on your freewill so He chose you first because like any good man He pursues the woman! We are His bride and He is the bridegroom and He wasn't going to let you chose Him first, He's going to pursue you!

That's Calvinism. So I finally got released to look it up! I was also recalling what I had told that gentleman at house church and still was feeling like "man, the Spirit of God is on that." Then a desire came on me "I want to research eternal security."

So the place I went was Andrew Wommack's ministry. (I would commend his online Bible Commentary to you as well - and it's free! Use the commentary as a tool. I read the Bible to seek the Lord and sometimes I go to the commentary to get some help ... just like sometimes I go to the concordance to get some help). I found Andrew's teaching on eternal security and about 15 minutes and 50 scriptures into the message, Andrew Wommack says exactly what I believe I got by revelation at house church. I thought "wow, that doesn't mean that it's gospel, but that is interesting" because I've never heard anyone teach what I got, and I got what I got just by seeking the Lord and being in

the Word and all of a sudden on the spot it came together for me and I couldn't think of a scripture that doesn't fit with this stance.

So then I think "I'm going to call Brad and ask him if he has a teaching on eternal security." He starts explaining all the way through from the Word of God and it is exactly what Andrew Wommack says and exactly what I had got! I said "have you ever listened to Andrew Wommack's teaching on this?" He said "yes - about 10 years after I got this revelation from the Lord! It was really encouraging to hear that he got it too." Brad told me he had struggled with reconciling some of these scriptures for about 10 years and then he got it! Then about 10 years later he heard Andrew Wommack teach on it and thought "oh Andrew got it too!" For me the Lord told me not to look up those doctrines for 10 years and then all of a sudden on the spot, when demanded of me, it came together for me.

So a lot of credit to Brad and Andrew Wommack for providing the lined-up scriptural basis for this message!

Scriptures Cited by the Eternal Security Side

I would like to start by sharing some scriptures that the eternal security side will use to back up their position. Now, I'm not saying these scriptures prove their position! I am saying these are the scriptures they use. So really, I would encourage you to almost hear / read these from a place of neutrality - we are just getting what the Word says in front of us.

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* Eternal security says that once you are saved you are always saved - you cannot lose your salvation. This verse says "EVERLASTING" life. Does that mean that you could lose your new birth life because you sinned? No, it means EVERLASTING!

John 10:27-28 *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand."* What does "ETERNAL" life mean? Not ending! And we see that we shall NEVER PERISH! And no one shall ever snatch them out of His hand!

Hebrews 10:10 *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."* "ONCE AND FOR ALL" is kind of like saying forever! You have been sanctified, made holy before God FOREVER!

Hebrews 10:14 *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."* You have been sanctified and perfected forever! Notice verse 10 says we have been sanctified forever, but here in verse 14 it says we are being sanctified. The sanctification in this verse is referring to your soul (mind, will, emotions) that will be sanctified as you renew your mind according to the Word of God

and that will transform your life. So you have been perfected forever in the Spirit and your mind, will, and emotions will be transformed as you get in the Word of God and are renewed by beholding as in a mirror who you are in the Spirit - in Christ. On one hand you have already been made holy, and on the other hand your soul starts looking more and more like Jesus the more and more you look at Jesus!

Romans 4:1-8 *“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, 6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: 7 ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.’”*

- Verse 4 makes it clear that if you work for your righteousness, to God, He counts it as a debt. That straightens me right up! We think “well you know, it’s alright ... I’m just mixing a little bit of works in there but I’m mostly relying on the grace of God.” But God says “if you believe and allow that to cause your righteousness, that’s good! But if you work to try and be righteous before me ... that’s a debt!”
- I was reading Romans 4 the other day - just cruising through it and understanding it well! I remember thinking Paul’s writing was so dense and full of run-on sentences. The difference now is that I have some revelation knowledge on almost every single verse and because of that I can just read it and there is just a beautiful flow. I want to encourage you that if you are not at the spot where you can read Romans 1-10 or so and just let it flow through you very easily, I’d read and re-read it 10, 20, 30, 40 times! It’s the best new testament theology in one place in the entire Bible. It’s systematic. That’s why it’s the first epistle. The people who put the actual cannon together were wise ... they thought “this one has to be the stating point ... then we can deal with the errors of the Corinthians and Galatians.” As I read and re-read that section over and over, it started to come alive to me and I realized that it was by grace that I had been saved through faith - not of works!
- Verse 8 shows us that God WILL not / SHALL not (future tense) impute sin to your account - ever! That’s an eternal security verse! “God I feel dirty before you ... ashamed before you ... a sinner before you ...” and you might only hear crickets. Sometimes He

will respond to you. Other times He will not answer you. Sometimes your current thinking pattern (the question you are asking) doesn't even allow for the revelation that He's wanting to give you! You have to be willing to take a step out of that and into an entire new thing. Sometimes God will not answer you because you are going a place in your thinking that He doesn't support. Other times (I heard this from Shawn Bolz recently) God's not answering you because He's wondering if you will walk out in the thing that He's already spoken to you. So if you are not getting an answer ask God "did you already give me the answer and I just need to walk into it ... or do I need to ask you a different sort of question that's outside of my current paradigm of thought?"

1 Peter 1:3-5 *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."* Your inheritance is INCORRUPTIBLE. It is currently and will forever be UNDEFILED! It will NOT FADE AWAY! It is RESERVED with your name on it in Heaven! And God's power is working in you to do all those things through your faith for salvation ... which is already been made ready to be revealed on the last day!

Conclusion ... for now

Again, these scriptures do not SUMMARIZE the Calvinist position. They are simply scriptures they will use in support of their position. So what I am not refuting Calvinism or Arminianism. I'm putting those aside, just like God told me to put those aside. What we are starting to do is to look at the Word of God and say "what's the Word of God say about eternal security" and we are just starting to see some of the scriptures that show just how secure we are in our salvation!

Next time, we are going to see more scriptures about that AND look at the "harder" scriptures and I believe you are going to see how they all come together in a way that shows the beauty and the grace of the Lord throughout! And you won't have to dodge scriptures any more.

I had a young man reach out to me recently. He was basically worried that he had lost his salvation. He asked me this in simple terms "but I said this ... but I did that ..." This is why this message (this week and next time combined) is SO IMPORTANT. In an instant, because of the understanding I've found, I was able to tell him that he actually was not even qualified to be able to lose his salvation. That brought great comfort to him. You can literally save a believer's walk with God with this revelation. Galatians 6:1 says *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness ..."*