

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

July 17, 2016

"Pay Close Attention to Yourself"

by Frank Himmel

Paul encouraged his young friend and coworker Timothy, "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you" (1 Timothy 4:16).

Pay close attention to yourself. That's good advice! While Timothy needed to be careful about what he taught, Paul knew that his teaching, no matter how truthful and effectively presented, would be compromised if Timothy's example was not what it should be. Also, there was a danger that Timothy might teach others but fail to make a personal application and therefore be lost himself (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:27).

Pay close attention to yourself is good advice for all of us, not just preachers. Pay close attention...

To your conduct. Time and again, the Bible warns us not to think we can get by with sinful conduct. We cannot sow to the flesh and reap eternal life (Galatians 6:7-8). "For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolator, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ

and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 3:5-6).

To your speech. James said if a man does not stumble in what he says he is a perfect man (3:2). On the other hand, he also said that one who thinks himself to be religious and does not bridle his tongue is self-deceived and has a worthless religion! (1:26). Lying, cursing, slander, gossiping, presuming, ranting, whining, complaining, discouraging, or just incessant rattling on – there is much to watch about our speech.

To your attitude. The parable we call The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) illustrates that one with a bad attitude is just as lost as one with bad morals. Pay close attention to your disposition. Do not allow yourself to become arrogant or self-righteous or hyper-critical or cynical or bitter or unforgiving or vengeful or prejudiced or self-centered or divisive or lazy or apathetic or self-pitying.

To your priorities. God always comes first (Matthew 6:33). He will not settle for second place. Be careful. It is easy to let other things – school, work, money, sports, recreation, leisure, etc. – begin to crowd Him out. Pay close attention to even the least incursion because that is how trends get started.

To your direction. Are you growing as a Christian? Are you more knowledgeable? Are you getting stronger against temptation? Are you increasingly active in God's service? If not, you are likely drifting away (Hebrews 2:1). Pay close attention to yourself. ■

1 John 2:19 and Once Saved, Always Saved

by Frank Himmel

The Calvinistic doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, popularly called “once saved, always saved,” says that once one becomes a Christian he can never do anything that would subsequently cause him to be lost. He cannot lose his faith, depart from the faith, or sin in such a way as to be separated from God.

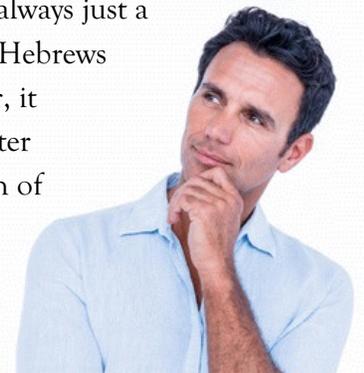
In strict Calvinism, a Christian cannot be lost because salvation is wholly a matter of God’s doing; man is totally passive in the process. A Christian being lost, therefore, would be a failure on God’s part. Modern advocates of this position usually take a modified approach which simply says God will not let this happen. Any case of a believer who abandons the faith and/or turns to a life of sin is typically dismissed as a person who was never saved to begin with. 1 John 2:19 is sometimes cited as proof of that assertion.

John was warning of antichrists who had gone out preaching error concerning Jesus. He said, “They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they were not of us.” Does this statement prove that everyone who departs from the faith never believed to start with? Not at all.

First, John does not say these false teachers were never with the apostles in their belief; he merely indicates that they were not with them at the time they went out. It is possible that they once believed the truth about Jesus, were deceived, and now had become advocates of error. That was precisely the danger John was warning against. If it could not happen, why warn against it?

Second, let’s assume for argument’s sake that in this case these false teachers were always just pretenders. That might be the case. Does the fact that *some* people are merely pretenders who are subsequently exposed necessarily mean that *everyone* who abandons the faith was always just a pretender? Of course not. Calvinists here assume the very point they are trying to prove.

Consider Hebrews 3:12: “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.” This verse warns that an unbelieving heart could develop “in any one of you.” Any one of you – anyone to whom Hebrews was addressed. Now think. If *everyone* who becomes an unbeliever was always just a pretender, and *any* of these Hebrews could become an unbeliever, it logically follows that this letter had to be written to a bunch of pretenders! That, of course, is nonsense, as is the notion that a Christian cannot fall away from God. ■



Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Greg Winget	TBD	Bruce Williams
SONG LEADER	Bruce Williams	Carlos Garcia	Chad Brock
OPENING PRAYER	Mark Clifton	Don Rapp	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Jason Chandler	Jason Chandler	
CUP	Kerry Gray	Kerry Gray	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Chad Brock		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Mark Clifton
CLOSING PRAYER	Albert Harrison	Chris Brooks	Adam Wilson