

Q. Isn't the teaching, "once saved, always saved," arrogant?

A. At first glance, it may appear as though someone being totally assured of his or her salvation is prideful and arrogant. On the other hand, never knowing for sure whether you are saved seems humble and pious. But this is a deception.

"Once saved, always saved" is a way of expressing the doctrine of grace usually called the perseverance of the saints. The perseverance of the saints is the teaching that God is saving His people through His Son, and He will make sure they persevere or abide in that salvation to the end. Believing this doctrine is the opposite of arrogance. It teaches that there is nothing we can do to save ourselves; no matter what we do, we are sinful and unworthy of salvation. Our salvation, then, must be entirely the work of God. He saved us from start to finish. Nothing we do contributes to our salvation.

When we believers say our salvation is secure, we are not arrogantly saying that we are better than anyone else. We're saying that we're miserable sinners incapable of meriting even part of our salvation, but that we're resting entirely on God to save us. We believe that by dying on the Cross, Jesus died for our sins. If Jesus' atoning work has earned our salvation, how can we fail? If our salvation is entirely in God's hands, how can we lose it? There is nothing arrogant about that. It is an attitude of trusting in God instead of ourselves.

Notice Romans 8:29-30: "For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Whom he predestined, those he also called. Whom he called, those he also justified. Whom he justified, those he also glorified." From God's predestining us to His glorifying us, our salvation is all His work and absolutely sure to happen. There is nothing here about our sins possibly getting in the way. In fact, it is impossible for our sins to prevent our salvation because God has justified us from all sins. "Who could bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, yes rather, who was raised from the dead, who is at

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the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:33-34).

Notice how clearly Jesus taught the same thing: "Most certainly I tell you, he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me, has eternal life, and doesn't come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (John 5:24). Notice that the believer now has eternal life, will not be judged, has already passed from death to life, and is thus completely safe. He or she is saved and will remain so.

Although they likely don't realize it, those who reject "once saved, always saved" are very far from expressing true humility. They are implying that their salvation is ultimately up to what they do. They either make the grade by being good or they don't. Those who are saved are saved, not entirely by the grace of God, but because they are better than those who are not saved. Isn't that arrogance? Isn't that a cause for boasting? But the Bible says, "Where then is the boasting? It is excluded. By what manner of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. We maintain therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (Romans 3:27-28).

The teaching of "once saved, always saved," or the perseverance of the saints, isn't arrogant. It is the acknowledgment that we can't save ourselves and the recognition that, since our salvation is in God's hands, he who has begun a good work in us will complete it (see Philippians 1:6). It cannot be arrogant to express our trust in God's ability to save us.

For more information, read *Once Saved, Always Saved* available on this page (http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/wohq_010.htm).

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