

The Words of two Calvinists' anxiety about their own Eternal Security because of Calvin's unbiblical "Perseverance" idea.

Sproul & MacArthur

by Phil Myers

R.C. Sproul and John MacArthur do not speak for all Calvinists today, but it is interesting to note their deep anxiety about their own salvation.

Calvinist explanation #1 R.C. Sproul, pastor, author, founder Ligonier Ministries, chancellor Reformation Bible College

R.C. Sproul, LifeCoach4God, "Fear Not"

"Since it is possible to have false assurance of salvation it is all the more urgent that we seek the Spirit's testimony in and through the Word."

"However, having a sound understanding of salvation is no guarantee that we have the salvation we so soundly understand."

"To have sound assurance we must understand that our salvation rests upon the merit of Christ alone, which is appropriated to us when we embrace him by genuine faith. If we understand that, the remaining question is, "Do I have the genuine faith necessary for salvation?"

Assurance by the "feeling" test. [We can't depend on promises in God's Word.]

"The second requirement involves a sober analysis of our own lives. We must examine ourselves to see if the fruit of regeneration is apparent in us. Do we have a real affection for the biblical Christ? Only the regenerate person possesses real love for the real Jesus."

Assurance by the "works" test.

"Next we must ask the tough question, "Does my life manifest the fruit of sanctification? (Answer): I test my faith by my works."

One of the precepts of Reformation theology is linked to the acronym TULIP. P = Perseverance of the saints and is expressed in two premises:

[Sproul's faulty syllogism]

Major premise: A true believer can never lose his salvation.

Minor premise: True believers are commanded to live holy lives until death.

Conclusion: Therefore, a true believer will personally endure through his entire life and be a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ until death.

The major premise is taught in Scripture. The Conclusion is refuted by Scripture. King David expresses assurance of his salvation long before his death. "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." *Psalm 23.6* [His numerous murders and adultery seem to come long after he had written Psalm 23.]

The major premise requires no maintenance formula. However, daily cleaning, rejuvenation, polishing, and strengthening is mentioned a thousand times in the Bible. Obedience is demanded ["*be ye holy as I am holy*"], required, expected, and practiced. [see APP # T, Lots of Good Works Are Expected].

Careless living is cautioned. ["*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.*"] Disobedience is punished. ["*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*"]

Calvinist explanation #2, John MacArthur

John MacArthur states that no one can be sure of the future, and so no "believer" can claim that in the future he will never depart from the faith and thereby [if he does depart] affirm that he never was a "true" believer even though his doctrine may be squeaky-clean orthodoxy. In other words, no one who claims to be a Christian can ever say with assurance, "I know I have eternal life" [except Paul]. No one can claim the promise of John 6.47, "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life."

This is the Gospel according to MacArthur: paraphrased from a sermon, Nov 2017

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“God loves the world. God provides deliverance from sin, from judgment, from death, from hell to those who have faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Savior of the world. There is eternal life in Him, forgiveness, escape from hell, and entrance into the glories of God’s own heaven.

“You’re a Christian because you believe that. All those, again, unambiguous truths are the objective, historical realities about the gospel. All true Christians understand them, and embrace them, and believe them; that’s why they’re Christians.”

Now, his further explanation countermands the assurance of eternal life.

“How can I be certain that I have truly believed and received that salvation?”

“You naturally will question, ‘Am I genuinely a believer? . . . If I’m really a believer, why can I not get victory over these besetting sins?’” All who are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. *Rom 8.14*

“How do I know the Spirit is in me? How do I know that Ephesians 3:16 is my experience? How do you know He’s in your heart? “Because He’s in your heart crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ **This is the evidence** that you are a true son of God.”
Nonsense, John.

John MacArthur: Grace to You, *The Christian’s Assurance of Salvation*, Nov 5, 2017

John MacArthur has just stated that his feelings based on his works can give the sense of assurance of salvation. However, my unbelieving next door neighbor [Mr. J] has that feeling that his works are clearly enough to grant him entrance into heaven.

Calvinist explanation #3

Michael Patton, Credo House, “*Doubting Calvinists*”

John Hannah, one of my favorite profs at Dallas Seminary, said one time in class, “I am ninety percent sure I am saved . . . but I am only ten percent sure of that.”

I don’t think there is any reason why we have to be absolutely certain we are saved at every moment. Calvinists often just get paralyzed in fear thinking they are not among the elect and have their hands tied.

You ask me, Michael [Patton], why do you believe you are saved? My answer: because today I am still believing. But I have to test this all the time, as I am not infallible. I could have a false faith, but I don’t believe I do. This ninety percent assurance will have to do. The witness of the Spirit I have today is enough for today. Tomorrow I will examine myself again. But my assurance does not have to be absolute and comprehensive.

Irene: [a responder to Patton’s article] - Calvinists have no assurance that they are among the elect. [We] are left with the very real possibility that their soul is hopeless, even though they “seem” to be believers today.

How do you honestly explain the Calvinistic love of Jesus to a child without lying? Really! Children have a way of asking the most simple, penetrating questions. Can you be honest and not scare them to death? Talk about INsecurity!