

Can We “Fall from Grace”?

Introduction: I sure have.... many times.... in many ways.... but, it wasn't God's grace that somehow moved away or “threw” me. No, it was I who *stumbled* and *fell*.

I. What *wasn't* the Cause/Problem: God.

- It wasn't that **God's love failed me in a time of need**- it remained constant, true, and engulfing- always, cf. Romans 8:35ff.
- It wasn't that **God's word proved untrue or unreliable**- ever, cf. Hebrews 6:13-20.
- It wasn't that **God Himself was somehow *unfaithful to or abandoned me***- He was/is always there for me as a Father should be, cf. 1Corinthians 10:13.
- And it wasn't that **God's grace was non-existent or insufficient**- it was always there... providing knowledge and instructions that supply salvation, cf. Titus 2:11-14.

II. Conceptually, think about “falling” for a moment. Is the concept of “falling” included in the New Testament?

- Jesus warned of *stumbling*, Matthew 18:6; but we can't fall? That makes no sense.
- Jesus warned of *stumbling-blocks*, Matthew 18:7a; but we can't fall? That makes no sense.
- Jesus warned of *those who cause/place* stumbling-blocks, Matthew 18:7b; but we can't fall? That makes no sense.
- Jesus showed the importance of *not stumbling*, Matthew 18:8-9; but we can't fall? That makes no sense.

Other inspired writers of the New Testament also warned against “falling”:

- Hebrew Christians were warned against developing an “*evil, unbelieving heart, in **falling** away from the living God,*” Hebrews 3:12.
- These same Hebrew Christians were urged not to follow their forefathers into waywardness and rebellion (and subsequent rejection by God), “*Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone **fall** through following the same example of disobedience,*” Hebrews 4:11.
- Galatian brethren were told that if they returned to Judaism and the keeping of the Law of Moses, “*You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have **fallen** from grace,*” Galatians 5:4.
- Paul warned Timothy of a then coming time when “*some would **fall** away from the faith...*” 1Timothy 4:1.
- Peter likewise warned, “*You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you **fall** from your own steadfastness,*” 2Peter 3:17.

III. Despite all this, some folks insist we can't fall from grace. Why?

- We “believe” something for one of two reasons: 1) the *evidence* forces us to a conclusion regardless of our feelings or desires; or, 2) our feelings and desires cause us to ignore the evidence, or at least to “see” it in a distorted way. Thus, passages that convey God’s unfailing *love, word, grace, and faithfulness* to us are “seen” to equate to the incapability of “falling” (being eternally lost after salvation is once achieved).
- Obviously, it is very *desirous* and *comforting* to “believe” that once saved, we can never be lost- that God can and will either prevent us from sinning in such a way as to be lost, or pardon/overlook sin so that we cannot be lost. This *desire* for *comfort* and *security* causes some to ignore all the biblical evidence that is contrary to them.
- Such makes no sense- biblically or otherwise. If we only had the example of Simon the sorcerer, we could and should know better. Note from Acts 8 that he: 1) *believed* the gospel of the kingdom and Jesus Christ, vv.12-13a; 2) he was *baptized* into Christ on the basis of that faith, v.13 (and thus meeting the requirements of salvation, cf. Mark 16:16); and yet, 3) after sinning, he was told by the inspired apostle Peter that *his heart was not right*, that he was *in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of iniquity*, and that he should *repent* and *pray* in order to be *forgiven*, vv.18-23. Thankfully, he did so, v.24! But it sure sounds like Simon, after *believing* and *obeying* the gospel through baptism, fell from grace and was in a lost condition until the matter was corrected through repentance and prayer, cf. 1John 1:6-10!

It seems apparent from the both the biblical record and personal experience that we can and do *fall from grace*- so the better question becomes...

IV. “Why do we fall from grace?”

While God’s love, word, commitment, or grace surely do not fail us in the matter- ever, our own *love* for Him, our own *words* of promise to Him, our own *commitment* of faithfulness to Him, and our own *appreciation* for His grace **do fail**, at least that’s what usually happens with me! We fall because:

- We do not continue to *grow and move forward*, 2Pet.1:4-8. Think of “falling on a bicycle- balance is maintained as long as there is progress.
- We fall because we become *short-sighted*, and thus not able to “see” where we’re supposed to be going, 2Pet.1:9a.
- We do not *remember* and *appreciate* what it took to enable us to *stand* and *walk*, 2Pet.1:9b.
- We do not *give diligence* to the *practice* of growth in faithfulness, 2Pet.1:10-11.

I hope these things help your understanding of God’s word, your faith in Him and it, and your dedication to them both. God nor His love, word, nor grace will EVER fail us (see 2Pet.1:3), but we can certainly *choose* to “fall away” from them and Him, 2Pet.3:17! Let us instead, “*be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord,*” 1Corinthians 15:58.