

Hello, I'm 21 and realize that I'm now questioning my salvation. For the most part I kept to myself and tried to seek my own will and was sporadic in what I wanted to do. I've lied a lot about myself and was exposed to immorality from movies, I lived vicariously, always waiting for the perfect moment to act. For several months I just quit attending church, now my mind wanders on the past on I've become cowardly and afraid, I no longer feel saved and don't have peace I once had. I no longer feel the [movement] of the Holy spirit and stopped sharpening my faith, I watched others walk and assumed I knew things and have seen other's wickedness and even started to point it out. Now I feel my crooked in my ways by studying other people's walk and not my own. Now I feel hopelessly lost and far from God because I don't think I've been following Christ. I feel constant dread of hell and my body physically feels pain and my eyesight has changed like I've been sucked in this vacuum and I don't know if I'm written in the Book of Life anymore. My question is, after all of this dwelling and loneliness and feeling that I've been left behind is there anyway to repent and follow Christ, even though my entire family seems just as lost.

The self-sufficient life is displeasing to God (Heb 12:15-17). When one believes he can live without God, it's called pride. Individuals should avoid pride because it: hardens the mind (Dan 5:20), produces spiritual decay (Hos. 7:9, 10), keeps one from spiritual progress (Pr 26:12), hinders one from coming to God (Ps. 10:4), ushers in self-deception (Jer 49:16), makes men reject God's word (Jer 43:12) and leads to ruin (Pr 16:18).¹ Pride caused Lucifer to fall (Is. 14:13–15) and it can cause men to fall, too (Mk 7:21, 22).

If one senses that he is out of God's good graces, he should immediately stop and get back on track. His will is always best (Pr 16:25). The Holy Spirit is willing to guide each person (Jn 14:16, 26) into all truth (Jn 14:17, 16:13) and holy living (Ro 1:4).

Red flags include living a life dominated by lies and deceit (Jn 8:44) or having no desire to go to church or join a small group (1 Jn 4:20). The wicked have no interest in being held accountable for their sin (Eph. 4:15, 16).

Darrell Ferguson said: "A righteous man falls seven times and gets back up. An unrighteous man falls one time--because he doesn't get back up." Pr 24:16. One must press on through trials, difficulties and dry spells of faith.

God gives us trials to test our faith. If one is to hope for heaven, he must persevere. In the Book of Revelation God praises those who have persevered and have not grown weary: You have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary (Re 2:3). Trials are God's gifts to rejoice in because through them one gains perseverance (Jas 1:2-4, Ro 5:3).

These are evil times. Individuals should be cautious so as not to be seduced by the world's value system. James wrote: Don't you know that love for this world is hatred toward God? Jas 4:4.

¹ Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1996). *Nelson's quick reference topical Bible index* (p. 504). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Faith follows what it trusts. If one trusts in himself, then he goes his own way. If one trusts in God, then he follows him even through trials. The world has nothing good to offer; but God has good rewards for those who overcome the world (Jn 16:33), the flesh (2 Pet. 2:19, 20) and the devil (1 Jn 2:13, 14).

Paying attention to God's presence will relieve loneliness. When an individual feels lonely he is not availing himself of God's presence (Ps 139:7, Heb 13:5). He need only to draw near to him (Jas 4:8). God is never more than 180° away (2 Chr. 6:24, 38). The prophet Isaiah wrote: A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out (Isa 42:3). If one has even a small amount of faith, God can work with him.

With that said, there are times when God is silent. As an artist is silent when he is working with a piece of clay, sometimes God, too, is silent. It does not mean that he has stopped working to woo and win that individual to himself. During times of silence, believers are expected to persevere.² With prayer an individual can gain wisdom. Perseverance will get an individual to maturity and maturity will get an individual to wisdom. That's what one gets out of trials. That is how one is made into Christ likeness. He should not begrudge trials. He should let perseverance finish its good purpose in his heart (Jas 1:2-5).

The Holy Spirit is offered to all men (Heb. 9:14). With his help, men can overcome: He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels (Re 3:5).

No one should continue in unrepentant sin. If one confess his sin, God is faithful and just to forgive him (1 Jn 1:9). Having confidence in that, will enable him to return to God. He is a just and compassionate father.

² Have strong faith [asking in prayer without doubt for an answer to prayer (e.g. for a return to nearness, his will, wisdom, etc.)] Jas 1:5-6.