

Following the sobering exhortations of 5:11–6:8, the author of Hebrews shifts to a positive affirmation and encouragement. Just as the author was confident about his readers, the believer today can be confident about his or her own life, when the two requirements laid out in these verses are fulfilled.

I. Display the evidence of salvation in your life (6:9–10).

1. *The author's confidence in his audience (6:9) is displayed in his personal address of them, "beloved," and in his expectation of "better things" and "things which accompany salvation."*
 - "Better" is used to contrast good things, not bad, and therefore is best understood as a step beyond the good of receiving revelation from God (6:4–5).
 - The "things which accompany salvation" have reference to what follows when one heeds the good news and has been redeemed, forgiven, cleansed, and received a new heart. It at least means future blessing (vv. 7, 12), but certainly includes a changed life showing fruit (v. 7), their work, love, hope and faith (vv. 10–12). Cf. 1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:3.
2. *The author bases his confidence on two reasons (6:10): the faithfulness of God and the loyalty toward God which his audience has displayed.*
 - The faithfulness of God (v.10a) is part of His character. Having worked good in them, He would not overlook the crop which their changed hearts produced (vv. 7–8; cf. 1 John 3:17; 4:19).
 - The loyalty of the audience to God (v.10b) was clear evidence of having changed hearts. Their work had been ordained by God for them (Ephesians 2:10). They were motivated by a love for God and revealed that love by service to other true believers ("saints", the people which God had set apart for Himself).

Knowing the warning of 5:11–14 (if you don't train, you regress), it is insufficient to be satisfied merely with one's present condition. Therefore, the author has a further encouragement.

II. Persevere diligently in your faith (6:11–12).

1. *The focus of perseverance:* They were to grow into a full assurance of hope.
 - They were to grow "with reference to" or "toward" a full assurance of hope.
 - Their hope was in the future promises of God, such as entering His rest. They were to be diligent in being fully assured of this hope.
2. *The quality of perseverance:* It was to be as good as their diligence in work and love.
 - Just as they diligently stood by those who were persecuted and visited those who were imprisoned, they were to be diligent at achieving a full assurance of hope.
3. *The duration of perseverance:* They were to keep at it until the end.
 - Perseverance means continuing until we enter into the presence of Jesus.
 - A "decision for Christ" without fruit is insufficient; neither is a good intention without follow-through.
4. *The pattern of perseverance:* They were to imitate those who had faith and patience.
 - Models help us understand, such as Abraham (vv. 12ff) and other OT saints (ch. 11). Even their leaders were models of faith they were to imitate (13:7).
 - Patience is more than waiting; it is "long-suffering", that is, patience in difficulties. Faith, in this context, is a firm belief that God will do what He promised, and showing that by obeying.
 - Patient faithfulness is in contrast to being "lazy" or "sluggish" (v.12). Indifference to the word (5:12, "sluggish of hearing") was the start to downward movement which could be countered by imitating models of faith and patience.
5. *The result of diligent perseverance in faith:* They inherit the promises.
 - Among other promises, they had already been reminded of God's promise of rest (4:1).
 - This is a perspective that places such value on future blessing that it warrants enduring present struggles.

Though they needed to heed his warnings, the author of Hebrews was persuaded that his readers were truly believers. They had given the evidence of salvation, but still they needed to diligently follow models of faith and patience. Ask yourselves those questions: What evidence in your life shows you have experienced a true change of heart? What models are you following?

Be sure of your foundation, that your salvation is in Christ alone by faith alone, and that it is revealed in the fruit that it produces. Then be diligent to grow in faith, patiently waiting for the Lord's return.

Supplemental questions for further thought and discussion:

1. If “better things that accompany salvation” (v.9) are compared with good things (and not bad), then the results of regeneration are even better than the good have hearing the good news (“enlightened”, v.4) and experiencing or benefitting from the work of the Spirit.
 - a. How are the “good things” and “better things” contrasted in the parable of verses 7–8?
 - b. According to Matthew 7:15–27, what evidences of salvation does Jesus seek rather than merely using Christian words (“Lord, Lord”) and claiming Christian works (prophesying and casting out demons)? How are they the will of the Father, and those claimed actions not His will?
 - c. What is the fruit that shows the work of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23)? What is the common factor with the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19–21)? How does that help explain what the criteria which Jesus has in Matthew 7:15–27?
 - d. Read 1 John 2. What can you add to the list of “better things which accompany salvation”?
2. The Christian life cannot be stagnant. True believers will grow or regress (cf. Hebrews 5:11–14).
 - a. Considering further 1 John 2, what is necessary for the true believer to grow in “things which accompany salvation”? (See especially vv. 3–6, 14.)
 - b. We all tend to follow models, consciously or unconsciously. (Children especially pick up the traits of their parents, even when they think they are rebelling against them.) Therefore, we should carefully and consciously choose the models to follow. How do we best evaluate the models we should follow (e.g., Hebrews 6:12)?
 - c. Whether you like it or not, you are probably a model for someone else. How can you become a better model that others can rightly follow? (See, for example, 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:7–9; Philippians 3:17.)