

Bible Studies for Life for June

28: Confidently victorious

June 15, 2009

A famous quote from Mark Twain is, "Golf is a good walk spoiled." The game of golf is impossible to master. Some would say Tiger Woods has mastered the sport, but even he has bad rounds. The rounds where Woods is on his "A" game, he is unstoppable.

Woods has climbed to the top of the golf world by his dedication to be prepared to hit every shot needed to post the lowest score to win a tournament. He also carries inside him a confidence in which he sees himself hitting every shot to perfection, draining every crucial putt and being the champion in every tournament he enters.

God intends for Christians to approach the ups and downs of life by having the assurance of eternal life, confidence in approaching him in prayer and confidence of victory over sin.

Assured of eternal life (1 John 5:12-13)

One evening, several church members were at church to help move chairs for an event. As the workers finished, I was visiting in a small group. In the course of casual conversation, a long time church member said, "I hope I go to heaven."

His statement bothered me because he was hoping to go to heaven. The Apostle John writes, "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (v. 12). Whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life. A believer does not have to worry about going to heaven because God has provided a way. The way is guaranteed by believing in Jesus.

Later, I prayerfully approached the man and inquired of him if he doubted his salvation. Some people hope they will receive eternal life. My brother in Christ responded to my inquiry by saying, “I used the wrong words the other day, I know I am going to heaven.”

Eternal life is not based on feelings but facts. Our assurance of eternal life is based on God’s truths found in the Bible (John 3:16). We do not have to doubt, we “believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” (v. 13). Believers are assured of eternal life by faith in Jesus.

Confident in prayer (1 John 5:14-17)

Fresh out of college, a young man was hired by a radio station to sell advertising. The young man had a degree in marketing and felt he was prepared for a career in sales until he began his first day on the job. The station sales manager gave him a phonebook and said, “Every business listed in this phonebook that does not currently advertise with us is your potential client.” He was given no leads or anyone to show him the ropes, just the latest edition of the phone book.

The young man felt like he was being thrown out to the wolves. What was he going to do? He had to sell in order to bring home a paycheck. Unlike this young man, a Christian has someone they can turn to when life presents a challenge. We are not left to our own devices.

By having the assurance of eternal life (v. 13), believers are encouraged to pray boldly and expectantly. Christians have confidence in approaching God in prayer, “that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him” (vv. 14-15). One must note the condition of prayer, “according to his will.” This condition rules out selfish praying.

Believers can pray in the confidence that God hears us. We also are

instructed to pray for a fellow believer in sin. “If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life” (v. 16). We should pray for all sinners to repent.

Certain of victory (1 John 5:18-21)

John ends his epistle with a strong emphasis on victory over sin and the assurance of salvation. Believers will continue to commit sins, but God will not abandon the believer. By asking God to forgive, believers can continue to serve in his kingdom.

Believers have been freed from their slavery to Satan because of “the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him” (v. 18). Verse 18 is not a declaration that Satan will never tempt the believer. The truth is that Satan can never cause permanent harm to a Christian that would keep them from entering into heaven.

The victory over sin occurs because Jesus came to earth to take our place for our sins. John tells us the Son of God came in the flesh to give us an understanding “so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true- even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life” (v. 20).

Believers also are warned to “keep yourselves from idols” (v. 21). An idol is anything that tarnishes ones relationship with God. Our guard must be up at all times because believers are not immune to the influences of a sinful modern-day society. The good news is that believers have power to overcome evil influences by our faith in Christ and by our obedience to Christ.

Golfer Tiger Woods might need his “A” game to win a golf tournament but what happens if his game slips to a “B” or a “C”? A Christian does not need an “A”, “B” or “C” game to get them to heaven. The game to defeat Satan

already has been played. Good news, Jesus won for us.