

**The 1689 Confession of Faith, Chapter 18 – “Of Assurance of Grace and Salvation”,  
Session # 17 – “Assurance and the Chastening of the Lord”, presented by  
Pastor Paul Rendall on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018,  
in the Adult Sunday School.**

**Paragraph 4** – “True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted; as (*n*) by negligence in preserving of it, by (*o*) falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit; by some sudden or (*p*) vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the (*q*) light of his countenance, and suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light, yet are they never destitute of the (*r*) seed of God and life (*s*) of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be (*t*) revived, and by the which, in the meantime, they are (*u*) preserved from utter despair.”

*n*) Song 5:2-3,6;   *o*) Psalm 51: 8,12,14;   *p*) Psalm 116: 11; 77:7-8; 31:22;   *q*) Psalm 30:7;   *r*) 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:9;   *s*) Luke 22:32;   *t*) Psalm 42: 5 and 11;   *u*) Lamentations 3: 26-31

**A Shorter Definition of Assurance:**

Assurance of salvation is the right conclusion that you come to, concerning your state before God, based on the truth of the Scriptures, that your faith in Christ is genuine, and that you have eternal life.

The first phrase of this paragraph says that true believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers way shaken. The word “divers” means “in a number of different ways” they could have their faith shaken. It does not say that a true believer could have the assurance of their salvation completely destroyed. But it could be shaken for a time. The length of that shaking could be for a short time or a longer time depending upon the person and their particular and peculiar situation. This possibility of the true believer’s assurance of salvation being shaken, does not happen to all believers, or in all believers alike, whose assurance is shaken. But the possibility should be acknowledged by all believers as we find examples of it in the word of God.

**1. The Important link between Assurance and the Chastening of the Lord.**

**Hebrews 12: 1-11** – “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "MY SON, DO NOT DESPISE THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD, NOR BE DISCOURAGED WHEN YOU ARE REBUKED BY HIM; FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE CHASTENS, AND SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present,

but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Our Confession states that “we can have our assurance shaken, diminished, or intermitted by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit”. We find such a sin in David in his sin with Bathsheba. During the almost 9 months period of time between his falling into this sin and the time when he was brought back through the prophet Nathan’s confronting him over his sins, he must have had his assurance shaken quite heavily. When Nathan had finished confronting David in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 12, verse 13, saying, “You are the man”, David said to him, “I have sinned against the Lord.” “And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.” So David had that word of assurance that he would not die eternally. But nevertheless, there were consequences. The child which Bathsheba had conceived by him died, and God said that He would raise up adversaries against him from his own house. This would be a part of the chastening of the Lord to David.

I want you to see the relationship of God’s chastening to your assurance. Even though David’s sin was forgiven, his assurance was shaken, diminished, and intermitted during the time of his recovery from this fall into sin. And this is evident by the way that David speaks of his spiritual experience during this time after he fell into sin, but even more, as he was being recovered spiritually from his fall. But his assurance in another sense, in the sense of God’s faithfulness to make him into a man who could share in God’s holiness, was most certainly evident and established during that same time. How can this be, that both of these realities could be taking place in the experience of David? It is because God has more than one purpose to accomplish in terms of our having assurance. God does want us to be upheld by the assurance that He will not cast us off forever if we commit a sin as a Christian. But at the same time, He wants us to see what an awful, God-dishonoring thing sin is; how much it dishonors Him; how much it hurts other people.