

*Hindrances Strew all the Way*  
**The Whole Christ by Sinclair Ferguson**  
**PCCC AM Worship – July 17, 2022**

The goal this lesson is to outline hindrances to assurance and how to counteract the hindrances.

Preliminary Scriptures

- *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. – 1 John 5:13*
- *Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice... Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit.... Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. Psalm 51:8, 12,14*
- *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Ephesians 4:30-31*

**Hindrances to Assurance**

1. Confusing the foundation of salvation with the means by which assurance of salvation is confirmed and developed.
  - a. We begin to ground our assurance on the fruitfulness of our service rather than on the fact that by faith we have a great Savior. The foundation of our assurance lies in him.
2. Inconsistent living leads to a lack of assurance
  - a. If there is no actual obedience to Christ, there will be no evidence of present love for him as Savior.
  - b. What is required is REPENTENCE.
3. Misunderstanding the role of affliction
  - a. Christians fall into difficulties and conclude they have fallen into divine disfavor.
  - b. We do not base our assurance only on whether God is blessing us in our lives.
  - c. Note the functions of affliction in the Christian life:
    - i. Afflictions may exercise a corrective function.
    - ii. Afflictions are also productive of character: tribulation produces patience, patience produces hope says Paul. Patience can be manifested, exercised, and strengthened only in circumstances that can create impatience.
    - iii. Afflictions create the context in which Jesus reveals his grace and glory, to us and in and through us.
  - d. It is vital to understand that afflictions are controlled by the hand of a sovereign Father. Otherwise we do not see them in their true perspective, and our assurance of God's love will sink underneath them.

4. Misunderstanding of how justification and regeneration change the Christian's relationship to sin.
  - a. After regeneration any powerful reawakening of indwelling sin may lead to the false conclusion that perhaps, after all, their conversion was simply another passing phase and that they have never really become Christians at all.
  - b. Union with Christ- through our union with him in his death we are set free from the penalty of our guilt, which he had paid for us; in union with him in his resurrection a complete, final, and irreversible righteousness is ours; in union with him in his death and resurrection we have been set free from the reign of sin, yet we remain sinners in ourselves. Sin continues to indwell us; only when our regeneration comes to further flowering beyond this life will we be free from sin's presence. Without our understanding of this our assurance will ebb and flow.
5. Attacks of the Devil
6. Conscience may hinder assurance.
  - a. Our consciences can be misinformed and needs to be reformed and recalibrated according to God's Word. God gives us a gracious salvation that our heart and conscience could not provide. This is good news if our conscience condemns us.
7. Negligence of the Means of Grace
  - a. Examples of Psalm 42 and 43 of the downcast and disturbed spirit as the psalmist is isolated from his previous sphere- worship, ministry, and fellowship.
  - b. Hebrews 10:23-25 where full assurance of faith is coupled with an exhortation not to neglect worship and fellowship. Worship promotes an increase of assurance that we really are Christ's since we love him, we love his Word, and we love his people. Do not neglect this or you diminish assurance.
  - c. In baptism and the Lord's Supper we get the same Christ even better with a firmer grip of his grace through seeing, touching, feeling, and tasting as well as hearing.
  - d. It is one of the wiles of the Devil to discourage doubting believers from seeking fellowship, sitting under the Word, and coming to enjoy the gifts Christ has given to reassure us of his love for us. We ignore this at great peril.
8. Conclusion: On the PLUS SIDE!
  - a. Assurance produces true humility, confidence in our Father, trust in Christ as our Savior, joy in the Spirit as the Spirit of sonship, seal of grace, and earnest of our inheritance as sons and daughters of God. When these are the hallmarks of our lives, then the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ has come home to us in full measure, and that is one of the great needs of our times.