



[Hebrews 2:3](#)

(3) How shall we escape, *if we have neglected so great a salvation; which was first received when it was spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him;*
A Faithful Version

What had happened to the people to whom the [book of Hebrews](#) was written? They were losing—indeed, had already lost—much of their former conviction. Though they had plenty to believe in relation to [God](#), as Paul shows within the epistle, their conviction was dissipating through neglect. They were not working out their [salvation](#) ([Philippians 2:12](#)); thus, they were losing it!

Conviction is the opposite of superficiality. This does not mean a superficial person cannot be religious. Rather, he may appear religious outwardly, but in terms of a true, inward transformation of the heart, he is lacking, as seen in the absence of zeal in seeking change or in real application of righteousness.

In Paul's judgment, the Hebrews had lost the internal certainty that what they believed was right, trustworthy, and so important that they should willingly give their lives to it. They were allowing other concerns like business, social, and entertainment matters too much time and attention. In [the world](#), the forces of hostile skepticism are everywhere and constantly pressuring a Christian from every angle. The Hebrews' works showed that they were steadily retreating before that pressure.

This world is the Christian's largest, broadest field of battle, and nearly constant influences designed to drive a wedge into our carnality emanate from it. What happens if we neglect the right use of God's gift of [faith](#)? Hebrews shows us that a Christian does not immediately "lose it," but as he slowly spirals downward, spiritual life becomes merely an intellectual position to be held, not a striving after righteousness. God becomes merely an object of intellectual thought, not a motivation for change of behavior and attitude to imitate Him. Church attendance and religion become

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intellectualized but not experiential. That is how [Laodiceanism](#) ([Revelation 3:14-22](#)) becomes a reality in a Christian's life. This is especially likely to occur when a Christian group is economically comfortable.

God's gift of faith is intended by Him to be intellectual, practical, and motivational. This brings us back to the many examples Paul uses in Hebrews 11 to illustrate how faith is most profitably used. He provides an orderly arrangement of instruction from basic definitions and builds toward the more difficult principles.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Christian Fight \(Part Four\)](#)

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