Difficult is the way that leads to life (Mt 7:14, NKJV)

Christians are in an intense struggle against sin (Heb. 12:4). Evil is trying to overcome us but we can overcome it by good (Rom. 12:1). We must be an overcomer in the end to inherit God’s kingdom and escape the lake of fire (Rev. 21:1-8). We might have to shed our blood (Heb. 12:4) and die a martyr to overcome (Rev 12:11). If we disown Jesus, he will disown us (Mt. 10:33; 2 Tim 2:12). If we look back after putting our hand to the plow, we are not fit for God’s kingdom (Lk. 9:62). It is possible to again get entangled in sin and be overcome by it (2 Pet. 2:20; 1 Tim. 5:11). Our current spiritual battle is for spiritual life or death itself (Rom. 8:13; Jam. 5:19,20; Lk. 15:24; etc.). We are told to put forth every effort to enter the narrow door, for many will try to enter but will not be able to (Lk. 13:24), and put forth every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with God (2 Pet. 3:14).

There will be many deceived by false prophets (Mt. 24:11). Many will turn away from the truth (2 Tim. 4:3,4). Many will be deceived by false teachers declaring heresies (2 Pet. 2:1,2). People will be deceived by satanic miracles (Rev. 19:20; 2 Thess. 2:9-12). We are to add to our faith various virtues to make our calling and election sure (2 Pet 1:5-10). We must continue in God’s kindness or we will be cut off from spiritual life (Rom. 11:20-22). We must continue in the teaching of Jesus to have God (2 Jn. 9). We must persevere under trial to receive the crown of life (Jam 1:12). We must bring forth good fruit or we’ll be cut down and thrown in the fire (Jn. 15:1-6; Lk. 13:6-9). The lukewarm will be spued out of Jesus’ body (Rev. 3:15,16). Only a few (the minority) at Sardis didn’t soil their spiritual clothes and were still worthy to walk with Jesus (Rev. 3:4, 5). It is our personal responsibility—not God’s—to keep our lamps burning (Lk. 12:35), keep ourselves pure (1 Tim. 5:22), keep ourselves from idols (1 Jn. 5:21) and keep ourselves from the spiritual pollutants of this world (Jam. 1:26, 27). It is possible to quickly turn away from God (1 Tim. 5:15; Gal. 1:6), return to sin and go back as a dog to his vomit or a washed sow to the mud again (2 Pet. 2:22). We must keep God’s word not to die spiritually (Jn. 8:51).

Jesus is the source of eternal salvation, but only for those who obey him (Heb. 5:9). Only those who do God’s will shall enter God’s kingdom (Mt. 7:21). We have to put God’s word into practice to be the Lord’s spiritual family (Lk. 8:21). If we forsake God, he will forsake us (2 Chron. 15:2). After initial salvation we are to be afraid of God, who can destroy both our body and soul in hell (Mt 10:28; Lk 12:4,5). It is hard for the righteous to be saved (1 Pet. 4:18; Mt. 7:14). Even the apostle Judas Iscariot lost his salvation (Mt. 10:1-4 cf. Mk. 14:21; Jn. 17:12) and the Lord’s original disciples, who were trying to be the greatest in the kingdom, would have to change to enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 18:1-3).

To think you are standing firm is to be set up for a spiritual fall (1 Cor. 10:12) and to be arrogant (Rom. 11:20). God opposes the arrogant (1 Pet. 5:5). Without holiness and a pure heart at death, no one will see God (Heb. 12:14; Mt. 5:8; Rev. 20:6). We have to persist in doing good to get eternal life (Rom. 2:6-8) and sow to please the Spirit of God to reap eternal life (Gal. 6:8,9).

Bad company corrupts good character (1 Cor. 15:33), so we must be careful with our friends and who teaches us. We need to avoid every kind of evil (1 Thess. 5:22) and that includes certain people, places and things. It is possible to believe in
vain (1 Cor. 15:2), cease believing (Lk. 8:13) and have our faith shipwrecked (1 Tim. 1:19) and destroyed (2 Tim. 2:18; Rom. 11:19-21). We can also fall away (Heb. 6:6; Lk. 8:13) and no longer be known by Jesus after we became spiritual virgins and had a burning spiritual lamp (Mt. 25:12). If we take words away from God’s book of prophecy, he will take our share of the holy city away from us (Rev. 22:19). Loving God is a salvation issue (Jam. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:9), which is the same as obeying God (Jn. 14:15,21,23). Being faithful to God to the point of death (Rev. 2:10,11) is also a salvation issue.

God will take our talent back if we do not bring forth gain (Mt. 25:28) and have us cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 25:30), which is a description of the fiery furnace (Mt. 13:41,42; 13:49,50; 8:12) and not a place in heaven like the heretical eternal security teachers want us to believe. If we don’t forgive others who sin against us, we will not be forgiven (Mt. 6:14,15; 18:34,35). We must follow Jesus to have the light of life (Jn. 8:12). If we defile our bodily temple, God will destroy us (1 Cor. 3:17). If we become a friend of this world we also become God’s enemy (Jam. 4:4), and raging fire will consume God’s enemies (Heb. 10:27). We must come out from the world and be separate to be received by God (2 Cor. 6:14-17). We must endure to the end through persecutions to be saved (Mt 10:22). We can have the Spirit of God leave us (1 Sam. 16:14; Heb. 3:6). We are told to hold on to what we have so that no one will take our crown (Rev. 3:11), and hold to our courage and the hope which we profess (Heb. 3:6). The cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur (Rev 21:8). For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God (Eph 5:5). The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God, that is, the fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9,10). Even hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy can cause one not to inherit the kingdom of God (Gal 5:19-21).

To think we can sow to please the flesh and reap eternal life is an indirect evil attempt to mock God and to be deceived (Gal. 6:7-9). The devil is not in hell now, but is trying to devour us (1 Pet. 5:8,9), and we must resist him to have him flee (Jam. 4:7). We must put on the whole armor of God to stand against the devil (Eph. 6:11). There are no secret sins, motives or thoughts before God (Heb. 4:13). It has always been impossible to sin and get away with it, even for the angels (2 Pet. 2:4-9). It is better to cut your hand or foot off and gouge your eye out than for sin to drag you into eternal hell fire (Mk. 9:43-48). It is righteousness which delivers from spiritual death (Prov. 10:2; 11:4), and the righteous are those who do what is right (1 Jn. 3:7). Those who do what is sinful are from the devil (1 Jn. 3:8). We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands (1 Jn. 2:3). The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 Jn. 2:4). The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. (Jn. 12:25) We can develop a sinful and unbelieving heart which turns away from God (Heb. 3:12). To share in Christ, we must hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first (Heb. 3:14). To continue to remain in the Son, we will have to see to it that what we have heard from the beginning remains in us (1 Jn. 2:24,25). According to true grace teaching, eternal life is also a hope (Titus 3:7), yet to be reaped (Gal. 6:8,9), in the age to come (Mk. 10:30) for only those who persist in doing good (Rom. 2:7), and do not grow weary and give up (Gal. 6:9). The most righteous man on earth in his day was Job and he was blameless, upright, feared the Lord and shunned evil (Job 1:8). God esteems: him who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at his word (Isa 66:2). Are you a real Christian?

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