Assurance in the Christian Life

The Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 18

I. WCF 18.3: Assurance in the Life of a Believer

A. The Relationship of Faith and Assurance

i. Why don't all believers always have a full assurance of faith?

ii. Assurance of faith isn't always strong because _____ isn't always strong!

iii. The debate: Does assurance belong to the essence of faith?

1. Faith contains the _____ of assurance, but it must grow into a tree.

2. WCF: "*This infallible* assurance does not *so belong* to the essence of faith."

B. How to Grow in Assurance

i. First, how we don't grow in assurance: "Without _____ revelation."

ii. How we can grow in assurance: The right use of _____.

C. The Duty of Every Christian

i. Giving all diligence to make our _____ & _____ sure (2 Peter 1:3–14).

ii. True assurance produces peace, joy, love, & _____!

II. WCF 18.4: Lack of Assurance in the Life of a Believer

A. The Various Ways Assurance May Waver

i. Frist is negligence in preserving it: Neglecting the _____.

ii. Second, by falling into some special sin that wounds the conscience.

iii. Third, by some sudden or vehement _____.

iv. God's withdrawing the light of his countenance: The _____ of the soul.

v. Reflections: Our spiritual enemies want to _____!

B. God's Promise to True Believers

i. God promises to support us from _____, deliver us from trials, and revive us.

ii. True assurance won't _____ or _____ fall away.

III. Practical takeaways: The doctrine of assurance…

A. Explains why we don't always experience assurance the same way.

B. Exhorts us to immerse ourselves in God's Word, Sacraments, and Prayer to grow assurance

C. Extols God for his love and grace.

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Chapter 18.3–4: *Of The Assurance of Grace and Salvation*

3. This infallible assurance does not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he becomes a partaker of it: yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things that are freely given him by God, he may attain to it without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means. And therefore it is the duty of everyone to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that in this way his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and cheerfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation shaken, diminished, and intermitted in various ways; as, by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin that wounds the conscience and grieves the Spirit; by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, and allowing even those who fear him to walk in darkness and to have no light: yet they are never utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brothers, that sincerity of heart, and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may be revived in due time; and by which, in the meantime, they are supported from utter despair.