WHEN YOU STUMBLE BADLY

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. Jude 24-26

A popular Christian song goes, "He'll never let you fall..." and while the words are comforting and assuring, they can be misleading. The fact is that individuals whose hearts have been touched by the divine do, on occasion, stumble badly. Their marriages face difficulty. Their kids don't always stay out of trouble. They don't always stay on the straight and narrow. They stumble, and on occasion they fall. Why? Because God failed them, or because they failed Him?

Scripture gives positive assurance that once you have placed your trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you belong to Him in an unending relationship—which gives you a measure of peace and comfort. Those beautiful words at the end of Jude's letter, found in the New Testament, have always brought comfort to me. Jude finished his letter saying, "To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy..." (Jude 24). Those words constitute a powerful promise. Even that phrase "keep you from falling" has images in the original language which make it even stronger. For example, the phrase "to keep from falling" means "to guard" as you would a prisoner, or to sustain or help you because of the superior strength of the one who supports you.

In addition to what Jude said, there are many other powerful promises which offer encouragement and help, such as you find in the last part of Romans 8 where Paul asks, "Who can separate us from the love of Christ?" and the obvious answer is nothing or no one.
What Jude describes--your relationship with God since you have been born again--is solid and sure. You don’t have to be concerned about His rejecting you when problems come. At the same time, Jude has just given some strong words of advice as to the part that you as an individual play in your relationship with God.

Take time to read that little book consisting of one chapter, tucked into the New Testament just before the last New Testament book, the book of Revelation. Notice how Jude says, "I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (v. 3, NASB), and the word *contend* means “to fight for something,” or “to struggle in earnest.” He talks about individuals who would turn the hearts of God’s children towards the base things of the flesh--things which cause people to stumble.

Then He urged them, "But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life" (v. 20,21, NASB).

When your heart is turned towards heaven, it’s tough for your feet to take you the opposite direction. This business of stumbling and falling was also on Peter’s mind when he wrote his second letter. In this letter Peter said, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires." He tells them to focus their thinking on faith, goodness and spiritual things, and then adds, "...if you do these things, you will never fall."(2 Peter 1:3-4,10).

You can be sure, friend, God has made provision for you to insure that you will never fall when you walk in touch with Him day by day. Of that, you can be certain!

Resource reading: The book of Jude