

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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August 26, 2018

“Apostasy Versus Steadfastness #2”

By Brian Meade

The apostle Peter warns and admonishes us in 2 Peter 3:17-18, *“You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”*

As we continue our study of attitudes and decisions that lead us farther away from God, and into apostasy. Let us consider the people we fellowship, and the effect they can have on us to leave the faith.

(3) When Our Fellowship Changes to Worldly People.

The Bible warns us in 1 Corinthians 15:33, *“Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.”* (NASB)

The major problem of having worldly friends, with whom we frequently associate with, is the influence they can have on us.

We may have even gotten away from the close association of these types of friends when we obeyed the gospel, and were determined to live godly— but after a while, we let them back into our life again.

This is precisely the danger that Peter refers to in 2 Peter 3:17, concerning the affect that, *“unprincipled men”* can have on us to *“fall from your own steadfastness.”*

The questions we really need to ask ourselves: (1) Why do I enjoy being around these kinds of friends? (2) What do we have in common that bonds us together in friendship? (3) Am I influencing them or are they influencing me?

As you may know the popular saying, *“Birds of a feather flock together.”* That old saying says a lot about why we hang around certain people more than others. We tend to want to be with the people we have something in common with them in character, morals, or activities.

If we like to be around the friends that drink alcohol, use vulgar or obscene language, are disrespectful of others, and generally have loose morals— we need to consider: Have we moved from the pure morality that God teaches us in scripture to be? (Titus 2:11-12; 2 Corinthians 7:1)

It may very well, be that we have changed to be more like our worldly friends than what we would care to admit. Especially, if we prefer these kind of friends to our Christian friends. That kind of shift can be fatal to our spiritual life in Christ.

(4) When We Forget Who We Are As A Christian.

In 2 Peter 1:5-8, Peter outlines the good character and qualities that Christians should have in their lives. Peter says to all Christians, 5 *“Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence,*



and in your moral excellence, knowledge, **6** and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,**7** and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. **8** For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

But in 2 Peter 1:9, Peter describes the person either fails to add these qualities to their life or leaves them, when he says, “For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins.”



This is the serious matter of forgetting what kind of person that we need to be in our conduct, as a follower of Christ. When situations and circumstances arise that we have to choose good conduct over the evil conduct that temptations lead us to—the matter of forgetting who we are becomes a problem in the decision process, as we begin to have an identity crisis!

As Christians, we need to have strong convictions about the way we are going to live. Faithfulness is an intentional way of life, and not something we can forget and still have. When we forget the devotion and commitment to God that we once had, it is then that the Devil can have his way with our lives. The eventual apostasy is the sad result our lack of due diligence to remain faithful as we should. (2 Peter 1:5; Proverbs 23:23)

(5) When We Lose Our Desire to Go to Heaven.

It hardly seems possible that someone would no longer seek the reward of the righteous (Matthew 25:23; 2 Timothy 4:8), but it does happen. They might even deny the charge, but the apostatizing Christian—who has lost his or her desire to read and study God’s word, attend services regularly, honor and praise God in worship, and only gives lip-service to faithfulness—is not doing the things a Christian does to get to heaven.

Our desire for something comes from the heart, and Jesus spoke about the different kinds of hearts in Mark 4:3-8. In Jesus’ explanation of the parable, He speaks about the thorny ground or heart, when He said, “*But the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*” (Mark 4:19)

This person may still be attending services with the saints, but their heart is not where it used to be. The desire for other things has a stranglehold on their time, attention, dedication, and commitment. This is the person who would rather go bowling on a Wednesday night than meet with the brethren for Bible study. The sad reality is, they may not even recognize they are on road to apostasy until it is too late!

The major problem of trying to restore such a one to faithfulness, such as Hebrews 6:4-6 speaks to, is the lack of desire to follow Jesus anymore. For someone who completely lost their desire to follow Christ, “*It is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.*” (Hebrews 6:6) You have to want to serve Christ (Matthew 11:28-31; Revelation 22:17).

Spotlight On A Bible Verse: John 20:30-31

By Jarrod Jacobs

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

John 20:30-31 stands as the “purpose statement” for the book of John. Why did John write what he did? He wrote so men would believe, and through this faith, men might have spiritual life. He did not record every miracle Christ performed. Rather, he recorded seven miracles before Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, and one after His resurrection as proof positive that Jesus is the Son of God. Why so few? Perhaps it is that he understood that if we do not believe the record of the miracles in this book, we would not believe if he had listed 1000 miracles!

Faith is vital to us. As John notes, it is through faith that we can have life. This is evident not only here, but in other places in the Bible. For example, without faith, we cannot please God (Heb. 11:6). Furthermore, without faith, there is no way we can go to Heaven (Jn. 8:24; Mk. 16:16; etc.). Therefore, we need to have faith. We need a living faith (Jas. 2:26), a strong faith, a faith that will keep us going when the hard times come. Therefore, in his gospel record, John says his purpose in writing was to help future readers have the kind of faith that will save. Do you believe what John wrote?

GOSPEL MEETING

Trey Haskett
Sunday October 21st
Monday-Friday 22nd-26th
7:00 PM Nightly

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Betty Hurst, Steve Switcher, Gail Armstrong, Nicky Curtis, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), Charlene Newborn, Greg Fields, June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Clois Wright, Debbie Keplinger, Gaddy Hall, Madeline Flippo, Karey Trimble, Jerry Trimble, Janis Johnson, Randy Ferrell, Delain Doles, and Daniel Holloway

We rejoice with the Harris & Hearn family as JaLynn Hearn was baptized last Sunday!!

Our Gospel Meeting with Trey Haskett begins Sunday—October 21st to the 26th.
(7:00 PM Nightly— Monday thru Friday)

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer:

Tim Harris Jr.

Preaching:

Brian Meade

Sermon:

"The Name christian"

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Jerry Kennemur

The Book of John (Mike Willis)

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Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements:

Paul Busby

Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:

Dan Cottrell

Song Leader:

Paul Busby

Lord's Table:

Paul Johnson

Assisting:

Lee Busby & Adam Harris

Song Service:

Men of the Congregation lead Singing

Invitation:

Fred Johnson

Closing Prayer:

Nathan Meade

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

August 29th:

Auditorium Bible Class:

Paul Busby

1 & 2 Kings (Mike Willis)

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Invitation:

Paul Johnson

Song Leader:

Dan Cottrell

Closing Prayer:

Chris Callahan