

### **THEY ARE AGAIN ENTANGLED!**

May 25, 2014

The apostle Peter wrote, “For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A DOG RETURNS TO HIS OWN VOMIT,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.” (2 Pet. 2:20-22, NKJV). If anyone knew the realities and dangers of “backsliding,” it was Peter.

Unfaithfulness is a gradual process, often overtaking a Christian by surprise. It is easier to miss a service if you missed the same one last week. The next thing you know, you are coming every once in a while and never usually more than just on Sunday morning during the worship hour. Perhaps, one is never able to get to the services of the Lord on time, and may even miss a majority of the class period or worship.

There are many different things that can cause a person to become unfaithful to the Lord. However, we must also understand that an attendance problem is simply a symptom of a far greater problem, a heart problem. Some of the things that can cause one to become unfaithful are:

**PRIDE** is usually the first step in unfaithfulness. Peter boasted of his faithfulness prior to his denial of Jesus. The Proverbs writer stated, “Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18). One may ask why pride is the first step. Remember that the first step into the kingdom is humility (Mt. 18:3-4). If one will not submit to the commandments of God, they have not learned to have a humble mind toward Him. The Hebrew writer commanded Christians not to “forsake” or abandon our assembling together as Christians (Heb. 10:23-25), this would include any assembly that the elders have authorized such as Sunday morning Bible study, Sunday evening worship, and midweek Bible study. If we intentionally miss these services we have sinned!

**LAZINESS** is another step about which we need to be vigilant. Without diligence, we can be found to be unprepared (Lk. 21:34-36). A gradual drifting away will catch us unaware and we cannot afford to be lazy in our preparations for eternal life. Peter said, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). Never be found in a position to be caught off guard by the devil. Christians should always rely on encouragement gained from the brethren as we assemble, fellowship, and study together.

**WORLDLINESS** is a problem for which we all have to watch. It becomes easy to be comforted by the fires of the world, just as Peter found out before his denial. We have to understand that we cannot be comforted and warmed by the fire of the world and not get burned! Solomon warned that close contact with those things that will ultimately harm us is to be avoided at all cost (Prov. 6:27-29). We cannot flirt with the world and walk away unscathed (1 Cor. 15:33).

**DENIAL** can become a part of our lives just like it did in Peter’s. We may find ourselves being comfortable with people of the world. People of the world include non-Christians or unfaithful Christians, and like Peter, it is possible for a once faithful Christian to deny the Lord. When we choose worldly activities over spiritual activities we have denied the Lord and also made a loud statement

about what we find more important. We are called to worship Him (2 Thess. 2:14), yet we make excuses why we cannot. We are called to serve Him (1 Cor. 15:58), yet we render little or no service at all. We are called to stand by His side and suffer for His name, (1 Pet. 4:16), yet we avoid Him and do not assemble to worship His high and holy name.

When Peter looked into the eyes of His Lord, he realized his sin and fortunately, for him, there was still time to repent. But for us, when we see Jesus face to face the opportunity to repent will have been ignored by those that waited. If we are guilty of being unfaithful in any way right now is the time to fix our heart problems!