

WHY DO CHRISTIANS FALL AWAY?

The way of the world is only temporary. John wrote that *“the world is passing away”* (John 2.17). Moses rejected the *“passing pleasures of sin”* (Heb. 10.25). Why do so many Christians turn away from God, turn their backs on Christ, and give up their eternal reward of heaven for that which is only temporary? Paul asked this very question in **GALATIANS 5.7**: *“You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?”* There are two reasons that we can extract from this text.

Sometimes Christians fall away because of false teachings. Going back to chapter 1, Paul warns about those who are *“turning away to a different gospel”* which was a perversion of the truth (Gal. 1.6-8). For some, the truth can become difficult to accept. Therefore those who were once faithful Christians start looking for an alternate, more appealing message. It may be a message where restrictions are loosened and sin is more easily tolerated. It may be a message that is more about feelings than substance. We need to heed the warning of Paul and not get *“tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine...”* (Eph. 4.15).

Sometimes Christians fall away because of persecutions. While the text does not indicate that the Galatians were persecuted, we know that Paul was persecuted because of His faith. Paul writes, *“And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased”* (Gal. 5.11). This establishes that one can be persecuted for his faith. When that happens, some Christians, lacking endurance, fall away. In the parable of the sower Jesus described those who, *“when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles”* (Matt. 13.21). The Hebrew writer encouraged persecuted Christians who were considering apostasy. To them he stated, *“For you have need of endurance”* (Heb. 10.36).

Being a Christian in a world filled with temptation, perversions of the truth, and injustices is not easy. When Lot lived in Sodom, he was tormented *“from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deed”* (2 Pet. 2.8). But far worse is the eternal consequences of falling away from God (1 Pet. 2.18-22). If we endure and hold fast the word (1 Cor. 15.2), then we will enjoy an eternal reward (Rom. 8.18).
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“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
-Mark 16.15

November 6, 2022

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM

SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:30 PM

HOW CAN THE CHURCH GROW?

Sermons have been preached, books have been published, and articles have been written to teach members us how to cause growth in the church. Congregations which seem to be stagnant, or worse, declining, panic and wonder what they can do. We cannot forget that church growth is largely due to what God does.

Christians have a responsibility to contribute to the growth of the church. Paul writes that growth is achieved when every member is working (Eph. 4.16). Since the church is made up of individuals, church growth cannot happen unless there is individual growth (2 Pet 1.5-8)

Paul planted and Apollos watered (1 Cor. 3.6). Yet the progress that was made could not be credited to these alone as the Corinthian brethren tried to do (1 Cor. 1.11-13). The work was performed by Paul and Apollos, but it was God who caused the results (1 Cor. 3.7). The work that we do without the help of God results in Christians spinning their wheels.

Growing as a congregation is a tremendous task, and men are often baffled as to how to proceed. However, if we do what God has always expected us to do, (ie. Encourage brethren, reach out to the lost, be faithful in service), and leave the results to God, then growth of the body occur.
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IS SALVATION CONDITIONAL?

EPHESIANS 1:4

INTRODUCTION:

1. Is it possible to know that you are among the saved? Calvinism has made us hesitant to show confidence in our salvation.
2. Calvinism can be summarized by a five-word acronym.
 - a) **Total Depravity:** Man is incapable of obedience.
 - b) **Unconditional Election:** God predetermine who is saved.
 - c) **Limited Atonement:** Jesus died only for the elect.
 - d) **Irresistible Grace:** The elect cannot refuse salvation.
 - e) **Perseverance of the Saints:** Once saved, always saved.
3. To understand whether God has attached conditions to salvation, we must appeal to the Bible.

I. UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

A. Consider the word “unconditional.”

1. At the root of the word is “condition” which expresses the idea that there are conditions attached.
2. **1 SAMUEL 11.2:** *“On this condition...”*
3. Calvinism teaches that there are no conditions attached to salvation. It is unconditional.

B. Consider the word “election.”

1. Election (eklegomai): Ek – “out”; Lego – “to speak.” It carries the idea of being chosen.
2. Salvation came through the lineage of Jacob *“according to election”* (Rom. 9.11). It was God’s choice.
3. **1 PETER 2.9,10:** *“You are a chosen generation.”*

I. PREDESTINATION

A. Consider the word “predestination.”

1. Predestination (proorizo): Pro – “beforehand”; Orizo – “boundary.” A boundary established beforehand.
2. Before God brought the world into existence, He has established a boundary. His people are those inside.

B. What is this preestablished boundary?

1. **EPHESIANS 1.4:** *“just as He chose us”* The elect.
2. **EPHESIANS 1.4:** *“before the foundation of the world”*
3. **EPHESIANS 1.4:** *“in Him”* The boundary is Christ!

C. How do you get inside the boundary? (Gal. 3.27,28)

CONCLUSION: You can be in Christ by obeying the gospel.

THE REJECTED

We are living in a culture of universal acceptance. We as a society are expected and even demanded to accept everyone regardless of their choices. We are expected to accept those who choose a different gender and sexual preferences. We are expected to accept those who choose different religious beliefs and practices. We are expected to accept those who choose economic choices.

As much as this culture believes in universal acceptance, their acceptance is not truly universal. Anyone who disagrees with their philosophy or does not go along with the misguided choices of certain groups or individuals becomes unaccepted. When we insist on following the Bible and living by God’s choices and preferences (Matt. 4.4), we become the rejected. We are rejected when we express God’s views concerning proper gender roles and sexual purity (1 Cor. 6.9,10). We are rejected when we teach biblical principles of having a good work ethic and condemn laziness (1 Tim. 5.8).

Though it seems like our culture is changing around us, things have not changed at all. As it is today, so it was in the days of Jesus. Consider what Jesus Himself said in John 15.19: *“If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”* Earlier, Jesus said, *“He who reject you, rejects Me”* (Luke 10.16). In reference to living a holy life, Paul writes that *“he who rejects this does not reject man, but God”* (1 Thess. 4.8).

We must be very careful not to succumb to emotional manipulation. Our friends and family may threaten us. They may tell us that if we do not accept their choices, then they will pull away from us. We may be told that if we express any disapproval, they will distance themselves from us. Therefore, if we want to continue to have a relationship with them, then we will accept their choices and we will keep our objections to ourselves.

We cannot allow such emotional blackmail to keep us from standing up for what is right. It is important to remember that those who use such threats are the ones who are severing the relationship, not us. God does not cast anyone into Hell. Man does that himself by choosing to separate himself from God (Isa. 59.2). Though God pleads for man to make the right choices (Ezek. 33.11; 2 Cor. 5.20), if they choose to pull away from God, it is they who have severed their relationship.

It is our desire to see our loved ones living the way God wants them to live. We plead for them to make the right choices. We must continue teaching truth and setting a godly example, even if it means that we become the rejected.