

FALLING AWAY

Hebrews 2:1-3

Call it what you will; falling away, carnality, backsliding, slipping, it all comes down to one word that believers don't want to admit might be happening to church people, Apostasy.

Apostasy- Translated from the Greek N.T. - (defection, departure, revolt or rebellion). Many if not most bible scholars and believers do not believe that a true believer can be an apostate, however, many bible verses give a definite picture of what the pure definition is of an apostate person.

Warnings of Apostasy- Luke 8:13; II Thes. 2:3; II Pt. 3:17; I Tim. 4:1-4; Mt. 24:12; Heb. 3:12; Heb. 10:25; I Tim. 1:19; (I Cor. 5:1, 4, 4-5, 11); (II Tim. 4:9-10); (Acts 5:1-10); (I Tim.1:19-20).

DANGER SIGNS

Just as important as the early detection of a potential lethal disease is the detection and treatment of a spiritual decline in a church, an individual or a family. Like cancer, apostasy gives warning signals.

1. Loss of love for God's word- John 6:35, 47-48, 58 Just like physical food is necessary for the body to grow, so is the word of God necessary to grow spiritually and to stay in fellowship with God.

II Timothy 2:15 God expects His children to become skilled in reading and understanding His word and then to become adept at making application of the principles to situations in our life and others.

2. Loss of prayer life- Acts 12:5; Romans 12:12 We are exhorted throughout the bible to have a daily regimen of bible study and prayer, they go together. Prayer is the means by which we communicate our love, desires cares, and issues to our Father and without prayer He will not move.

Colossians 1:9-11; James 1:5-7 Prayer is also the way in which we receive spiritual strength and wisdom from God and without faithful prayer we find ourselves alone in our troubles.

3. Failure to attend services- Acts 2:42, 46: 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2 The first century believers gave much priority in coming together to commune, encourage and learn about God as a group.

Hebrews 10:25 Having a mindset of not wanting to assemble with fellow believers in your local church is a sure sign that there may be the beginning symptoms of the dreaded disease of apostasy.

4. Non-involvement of service- I Corinthians 12:18, 20, 25-26 God has guided every member to the church where they belong in order to help complete that local church and help believers.

Ephesians 4:11-16 Realizing the importance of our service to others in the church, not wanting to be involved in God's service is another red flag signaling a possible 'falling away'.

5. A critical spirit- Matthew 7:1-3 As part of God's family we should never exhibit a critical spirit toward other believers. We should always examine our own spiritual deficiencies through God's word.

Luke 18:9-14 We ought never to point out faults or lack of sincerity or integrity in others in order to appear better or 'holier than thou', this only tends to fool ourselves but others see the evil in it. A critical eye always exposes an impure heart- another red flag showing the possibility of 'slipping'.

6. Not standing for the truth- Ephesians 6:13-14; II Timothy 1:6-8 True believers are to stand for the truth of scripture and never compromise the Gospel and protect the name of Christ at all cost.

Galatians 1:6-10; Jude 1:3-4 God's people are to be uncompromising in all matters of truth and error pertaining to matters regarding the gospel message. Unfortunately, many of God's people are afraid to point out error and even church leaders will not mention names of those who misrepresent Christ and the truth while leading people down the wrong path. These are signs of 'apostasy'.

7. Lack of concern for God's people- I Corinthians 13:1-7; Galatians 6:9-10 The true hallmark of Christianity is supposed to be the displaying of 'Agape love' toward others, this is generally lacking.

II Corinthians 8:1-4; Galatians 6:2 The unfortunate reality for most believers is that they do not look beyond their own wants and needs to help those in great need or to help fulfill God's program of missions and showing forth the love of God. Those with these 'symptoms' are 'carnal' at best.