

Persevering without Fail “...but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

Matthew 10:22

By Daniel Mark

Recent news stories about believers deserting the faith of Jesus Christ have challenged us all with a haunting question of loyalty to the Lord. A prominent author whose bestseller was a blockbuster in the 1990s and who railed against homosexuality, decided to renounce faith in Christ and did an about-face by apologizing to all who he believed felt hurt by his previous Bible-based views on same-sex marriage. He then went on to disavow his beliefs about various tenets of Christian orthodoxy such as the absolute inspiration of the Scriptures as well as basic biblical morality. All things considered, it's instructive to understand why people who at some time in the past seemed to be stalwarts of the faith, go back on their commitment and become the polar opposites of their former selves. Reasons differ for every individual, but for all who once carried the banner of Christ, three things make up the common denominator of their apostasy.

Firstly, the person of the Lord Jesus is always the big Kahuna, and, for obvious reasons, Jesus Christ is the only BEDROCK of the Christian faith, so that any doubts and questions about Him would naturally upset one's trust and followership. No other belief is so arranged that its founder is intimately involved with each and every one of its adherents while also being organically joined to the corporate body of that faith. It's therefore perfectly accurate to say that the believer is a "little Christ." Paul, the Apostle, as he declared in many passages of testimony and identity with Christ said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philippians 1:21



Recently Tom and Kate Taylor hosted in their home Tom's second through fifth grade Sunday School class for a special Sunday lunch and a movie. Kate served hot dogs with macaroni and cheese, and popcorn was enjoyed during a showing of *Chariots of Fire*. Kate teaches children age four through first grade.

An apostate's first attack on Christ typically concerns the deity and divinity of Christ, and when they convince themselves that it's impossible for God to become a man, they move onto the claims He made about Himself. John 14:6, Acts 4:12, and 2 Timothy 2:5 are especially troubling and unacceptable to these turncoats. Any passage that equates Jesus with the Father, and that elevates Him above men and angels, is dismissed out of hand.

Charles Templeton was a prime example of this line of reasoning. Out of confusion and doubts, he enrolled at the Princeton Seminary. Unsatisfied with not having his doubts resolved, Templeton renounced faith in God and became an avowed atheist. He rejected that Jesus Christ could be the sole means to salvation. This reason is also why many moderns reject the Gospel as exclusivist.

Apostasy's second greatest prize comes by looking askance at the Bible that was once

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considered the word of God as fully and completely inspired by Him. This pattern is universal with seminarians many of whom, prior to their enrollment, regard the Scriptures as in errantly true and reliable. In seminary, the liberalism spawned by Higher Criticism and other interpretive methods, lure some to a skeptical posture and causes them to lose their faith.

Bart Ehrman, a theologian and scholar, perfectly fits the bill of those who started well but had their faith shipwrecked in seminary. He got “saved” at sixteen in the Midwestern State of Kansas, attended Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College, and then at Princeton, it all came crashing down. He lost it all to Historical Criticism. He has rejected much of the Bible and declared himself an agnostic or an atheist. Ehrman lectures widely at home and abroad, hoping to get more people on his bandwagon of doubt and unbelief.

Far too often, those who want to jump ship and embrace other belief systems, wonder if the God of the Bible is true and real, why is there such woebegone brokenness in the world, and how can that be squared with a loving Creator? The cancer of extreme poverty, wicked governance, and widespread lawlessness and other endless symptoms of a world that appears for some terminal explosion, have tempted many to abandon faith. Many are hauntingly unsettled by thoughts of helplessness and a God, if He exists at all, who doesn’t seem to care.

The Jesus Seminar is a group that was founded for the sole purpose of attacking and undermining the words of Christ in the Gospels by determining whether Jesus actually uttered the words attributed to Him. The only yardstick this infamous group had to work with was the opinions of their “scholars” and “theologians.” It was a methodology of arrogant arbitrariness!

At the end they wind up with a “gospel” package that left so much to be desired, it actually amounts to no gospel at all. It was an exercise reminiscent of Jefferson’s attempt to rewrite the gospels by stripping away all references to the supernatural because his deistic mindset would not allow any personal engagement with God and the performance or possibility of miracles. These attempts to discredit the word of God have the playground of apostates and skeptics, to their eternal ruin.

The old Satanic strategy of casting doubts on the word of God has held many in its thrall and has derailed their commitment to Jesus Christ. Because nature abhors a vacuum, these ex-believers latch onto all sorts of deceptions that may very closely resemble the truth.

Is there a preventive attitude? As in all things, the Bible furnishes us with all the guidance we need to combat heresy and other types of falsehood. In commissioning Joshua, after the taking away of His servant, Moses, God emphatically commanded Joshua to firmly take heed to His word and thereby gain success. Joshua 1:8 records God instructing Joshua that the way to success was to stay smack in the word of God and not turn away from it by whatever comes from the right or from the left. And that’s the ticket! A firm and uncompromising grasp of the word of God is the best safeguard against apostasy and all other brands of skepticism. Keep God’s word and keep the faith!

Financial Update

(Through January 31, 2020)

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...”

	Actual	Budget
Income	\$17,232	\$24,167
Expense	\$19,271	\$24,167

Windsor Chapel has sent \$3,274 to our missionary partners this year. That’s 19% of your giving!



Dwayne Walton, Executive Director of The Point in Parkesburg, Pennsylvania, was guest speaker in January when Pastor Andy was at Winter Blast Weekend with the Jr. and Sr. High students

Work Day

Please join us on Saturday, March 28, from 9:00 am to noon, for some healthy exercise as we spruce up our facilities in preparation for the Easter Egg Hunt which will be held at 3:00 pm on Sunday, April 5. We'll be weeding, trimming and raking outside.

Bring wheelbarrows, gloves and gardening tools if you can. Coffee and donuts will be provided! The rain date for the Work Day is Saturday, April 4.



Ministry Opportunity

Hospitality is an important part of Christian ministry (Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9). By serving others we serve Christ (Matthew 25:40). Be blessed as you bless others by joining the Hospitality Ministry and preparing hot coffee once a month before the worship service begins.



This is a perfect ministry for someone who desires to serve but has limited time. For additional information, please contact Steve Masticola at steve.masticola@verizon.net or (609) 924-4284.

Elder's Corner

By Tom Taylor

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Both the Old Testament (Lev. 19:18) and the New Testament (Mathew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Galatians. 5:14) teach us this. Loving our neighbors as ourselves is being like Jesus. Christ in us is not only the hope of glory but it is our calling, we are living letters meant to be Jesus to our neighbors.

You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Corinthians. 3:2-3)

So who is our neighbor? Sounds like a good question, one that Jesus answered with the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Those who God puts around us, next door, across the street, in the neighborhood, at school, at work, along the way. How are we to love our neighbors as ourselves? Some practical ways are:

- ❖ Spending time with them
- ❖ Having them over for a meal
- ❖ Listening to them
- ❖ Enjoying them
- ❖ Liking them (even if they are Eagle fans!)
- ❖ Finding ways to help them
- ❖ Thinking about them
- ❖ Praying for them

And, of course, being led by the Holy Spirit. What is He saying to you, for them? Introducing them to family, friends and sharing our greatest friend of all, Jesus. Loving our neighbor as ourselves is not only a command, but a wonderful privilege we have as the forgiven ones. We get to extend the Father's great love and forgiveness. The joy and satisfaction that comes in loving God and our neighbors is a true blessing. Let us make it a topic of our fellowship and find ways to encourage one another.

Further Up and Further In

*Inviting dialogue to encourage growth in
and among us*



By Cindy Bills

Love From The Inside Out

One of the most pervasive and consistent themes throughout the Bible—both Old and New Testaments—is that God cares very much about the way we treat people. He has created us in His own image, for love and relationship. And so it grieves Him greatly when we don't treat others well. Given the number of passages in Scripture exhorting us to love others, seek justice, offer mercy, pursue peace, and refrain from oppressing one another, it would appear that we aren't very good at this whole love and relationship thing.

At present, we are at war within ourselves: we bear our loving Creator's image, and we have His Holy Spirit residing in us. But we also have inherited Adam and Eve's self-seeking sin DNA, and we can't remove it any more than we can remove our biological genetic material.

The New Testament response to this conflict is continual exhortations and reminders to love one another, regard others as greater than ourselves, put others before ourselves, exercise kindness and patience toward one another, and so forth. These are appropriate exhortations, and we would do well to bear them in mind as we go about our lives. But there is a component to a loving relationship that is sometimes, if not often, overlooked: self-awareness.

Doctors Les and Leslie Parrott, Christian psychologists who have worked extensively in the arena of healthy marriage relationships, recently pointed out in their blog (https://www.symbis.com/blog/why-self-awareness-leads-to-better-love/?mc_cid=a00bb83a9d&mc_eid=51822cc571) that self-awareness is an important skill to learn and apply when dealing with a mate. I hasten to

point out that it is an important skill to learn and apply when interacting with anyone.

Being self-aware is not selfish! When we cultivate self-awareness, we prepare ourselves to interact and respond with sensitivity. If we are tired and grumpy, we are likely to inflict that on someone in our path. If we have just been unfairly criticized by someone whose opinion is important to us, we are at risk of responding defensively to someone else. If we have our minds on what we need to get done, we are tempted to be impatient and regard another person as an interruption. If we are aware of those potential obstacles to loving someone, we are more likely to be able to avoid these kinds of situational pitfalls.

There is another layer of self-awareness that cuts closer to home and is usually more difficult to recognize. Each of us has deeply-ingrained patterns of relating that started when we were very young and that have been influenced by our sin nature and the sinful world around us. These strategies may have been helpful when we were children, but without attention they can develop into the jealousy and selfish ambition that drives conflict (James 3:16). Unresolved hurts from the past, nursed by our pride and protected by strategies that keep others at a distance, become a part of our relating style without our taking notice. These represent, I believe, some of the childish things the Apostle Paul instructs us to put aside in 1 Corinthians 13:11.

It is crucial that we take a humble and critical look at how we tend to use our interactions to feel good about ourselves, perhaps with the help of a close friend. It is only as we become aware of how our counterproductive relationship strategies sabotage our interactions that we will be able to put those strategies aside and love others well. Self-awareness can be an ongoing exercise in sanctification as it gives the Lord an opportunity to expose our self-protection and to respond in confession, repentance, and looking to Him for forgiveness, healing, and redemption.

It may have come to your attention that superficial efforts to be "nice" create a pleasant relational

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vener but do not yield substantive, long-term relationship benefits. Being nice does not require much in the way of self-awareness. If we want the deep, rewarding intimacy that our Lord wants with us and for us, we will need to become more aware of what is inside us and how that drives our interactions. It is counterintuitive, but the more aware we become of ourselves, the more aware we will become of others, and the better able we will be to respond to them with empathy, compassion, and genuine love. Our Lord and Master wants nothing less than that, and we can rejoice that His Holy Spirit delights to do His work in us toward that end.

Answered Prayer

Who Do You Say that I Am?

Dorothy Soi

While attending an 8-day silent retreat several years ago, I only broke my silence during daily meetings with a director. Each day she would suggest passages from the Bible for me to reflect on and pray. I was especially pleased when she wanted me to consider the question that Jesus asked His disciples long ago and asks each of us today, “Who do you say that I am?” I happily spent the rest of that day and much of the night thinking about my relationship with Jesus.



picture of Jesus on the stained-glass window in

The next day I shared a long list with her describing who Jesus is to me including, “Savior, Teacher, Comforter, Friend.” After our meeting, I went to my favorite small chapel to pray. As I sat alone in the quiet chapel, my eyes

gazed at a beautiful

front of me. Noticing that Jesus was wearing a crown, I suddenly realized that I had forgotten to add that Jesus is my King.

The moment that thought entered my mind, something happened that was quite unlike anything I had ever experienced before! A scene unfolded before my eyes as though I were watching a video. I clearly saw myself as a small child sitting cross-legged on the ground at the feet of Jesus. With innocence and tremendous enthusiasm, the child-like me excitedly announced to Jesus, “You deserve a crown of the finest gold and precious jewels.” She took my whole life and all that I am and fashioned it into a crown for my King. But instead of gold, the crown was made of tin, and instead of precious jewels, it had dents in it.

Observing this scene from my seat in the chapel I wanted to shout, “You can’t offer that unsightly crown to Jesus!” But the child never hesitated. She confidently picked it up with one hand, stretched her arm upwards to Jesus, and lovingly offered the misshapen crown to Him explaining simply, “It was the best I could do.”

Jesus looked at the child and the crown with great love and tenderness in His eyes. He bent down, put His two large hands around the dented, tin crown, placed it on His head, smiled and said, “It’s beautiful.”

At that moment, the scene before me abruptly ended. I felt surrounded by an inexpressible love and peace that was so overwhelming I cried tears of joy. Jesus is love—a love beyond our human comprehension.

We focus on the dents in our lives, but Jesus looks at our hearts. We should come before Him with the faith of an innocent child, offer Him our imperfect lives and be confident of the abundant grace, love and acceptance Jesus has for each of us.

If you have experienced answered prayer or been aware of God’s encouraging presence during a challenging time in your life, we invite you to share your story in this new CC column. Let your personal 350-word story inspire and be a blessing to others.

Speechless:

Part Two

By Janet Berrill

Last month I told the story of Duane Miller who had lost his voice for three years until one day when God miraculously healed him. God has done a miracle in our lives as well; we were once dead in our sins and are now alive; we were once a slave to sin and now we are free; we are a new creation!

If you are a new creation, does it make sense for you to live like your old self? Just as it would have been ridiculous for Duane to live as if he had not been given a new throat, it is ridiculous for us not to live as the new creation that we are. So why don't we? I think it all comes down to unbelief. Do we really believe we are who God says we are?

In my own personal study time I have been focusing on believing God and believing that I am who God says I am. Who does God say I am? He says I am forgiven (1 John 1:9); I am redeemed – Jesus bought me from being a slave to sin when He died on the cross so I could be His (Titus 2:14); I am righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21 *“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”*); I am justified (Romans 5:1) – God looks at me just as if I'd never sinned. That is how God sees me, that is the truth of who I am. I have been purchased and am now a child of God. My identity is not that I am a sinner. If I view myself that way I am discounting the miracle God has done in my life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says that I am a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come. The old has gone, it is no longer who I am. Please do not misunderstand me. I freely admit that I am not perfect. I still sin, but my identity is no longer as a sinner, but rather as a redeemed child of God. God does not see me as a sinner, one who is separated from Him because of sin; rather He sees me as one who has never sinned and one who is in a right relationship with Him. If I continue to view myself as a sinner, I am discounting the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross to set me free.

Let me illustrate how God sees us with a story. There was a man who lived in England, and he

owned a Rolls Royce. He decided to take his car with him when he went to France for vacation. While in France his car had a mechanical problem that caused it not to start. Unable to find someone locally who could fix his car, he called Rolls Royce in England. They told him to sit tight; they would send a mechanic to help him. Sure enough, the mechanic came with his tools and fixed the car. When his vacation was over, the man returned to England expecting to see a large repair bill, but none was in his waiting mail. After several weeks of not receiving a bill, he finally called Rolls Royce and explained what had happened and that he never got a bill for the repairs. The person on the phone responded, “Sir, we have no record of any Rolls Royce ever breaking down.”

That's how God sees us after we have accepted Jesus. There is no record of us being a sinner. The term for this is justification. When we are justified, it is just as if we had never sinned. We are forgiven, but God goes further. He justifies us so that He sees us as if we never sinned. He keeps no record of it; He removes our sin from us as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12).

I think if we continue to identify ourselves as sinners, it would be like Duane continuing to live his life as if he had still had a painful throat and no voice. We were sinners, but that is the old self. I feel that when we go around saying to others and ourselves, “I am a sinner,” God is saying, “What are you talking about? No you're not! I set you free from that. You are a new creation. The old you is gone. Believe Me. Believe you are who I say you are.” And if we believe we are who God says we are, then we are going to live a different life than if we think of ourselves as sinners. I am choosing to believe God. Will you?

If you have any items or information you would like to share in the newsletter, please e-mail:

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