

## Drifting Away From God

Men's business meeting is today at 4:30.

### Directory Update

Everyone check the directory and make changes as needed. Every family can make changes to their own entry online. If you need help, or want Melissa to make the changes for you contact her directly. If you don't have online access check the printed copy in the back.

While some departures from God happen more quickly than others; I have never seen what I would call a sudden departure. Most departures are gradual, a bit-by-bit process. Hebrews 2:1 appears to be a good text for this subject, and it fits perfectly with our title, "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away" (NKJ). The Authorized Version says, "lest at any time we should let them slip"; making it appear that there might be some item of teaching which we let get away from us. Such is not the intent of the passage. The New American Standard says, "lest we drift away from it." It can be seen, then, that it is our drifting that is under consideration, and not something that is drifting away from us. This demonstrates that how well we are anchored to God and his ways depends, largely, upon our learning of the truth and our holding on to that truth, in both teaching and practice.

**The Possibility of Drifting**  
Our text has already established this possibility as a fact; but further reflections may help make this an indelible idea, and that it should be. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justifi-

fied by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). In Luke 9:62, Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth taken heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). One may be "overtaken in a fault" (Gal. 6:1). While our drifting may be purely unintentional, and even denied, nonetheless it can happen to any of us. We know that this can happen to the "lowly" in our midst; but let us not forget that it can happen even to the "mighty" of our number. When David received the news that both Saul and Jonathan had been killed in battle, he said, "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of battle!" (2 Sam. 1:25). And again, ". . . for the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty, and they are fallen both together" (Jer. 46:12). At the time when our text was written, those people were drifting back to Judaism. In our time the danger is in drifting back into worldliness or into denominationalism. To recognize the slightest bit of drifting in our lives should horrify us (Heb. 4:11). It can happen! Even to you!

### Reasons For Drifting

The reasons for drifting

may not be as numerous as the drifters; but there may be many reasons for drifting. First, it is the easiest course to pursue (Matt. 22:5). It is easier to overlook a little neglect than to press for improvement (Heb. 2:3). It is easier to accept a little immorality in our friends or Loved ones than to condemn their sin (1 Thess. 5:21; Rom. 12:2; Matt. 19:9). It is easier to keep our mouths shut than to stand up and defend the<sup>†</sup> truth (Jude 3). It is easier to make excuses than to get up and do what<sup>†</sup> God said do (Heb. 5:9). Jesus pointed out that the cares of this world could affect the productivity of the Word in our lives (Matt. 13:22). This is exactly how some start their drifting away from God. The Hebrew writer warned of the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13); and this becomes a strong current with which we may drift. Or, we simply might become "weary in well doing" (2 Thess. 3:13); and, we are urged, "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb. 12:3): In addition to the above, there are other, and important, causes for some drifting away from God and his word. A lack of knowledge

# Don't Get Sidetracked

## 1 Timothy 1:3-11

### Points to Consider

1. The Need for Constant Instruction and Reminders
2. Don't Get Sidetracked in Doctrine
3. Don't Get Sidetracked in Action

### The Need for Constant Instruction and Reminders

**1 Tim 1:3** *As I urged you when I went into Macedonia — remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.*

Paul reminded Timothy of his **previous** instructions. In this passage the word “charge” carries with it the idea of **continual** teaching.

**1 Tim 1:18** *This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare... 1 Tim 2:1* *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men...*

Paul **charged** Timothy to commit himself to fulfilling the prophecies that were spoken about him.

Paul wrote this letter to **exhort** Timothy to teach people certain things. He called Timothy to his side and begged him to continue the work.

**1 Tim 4:6** *If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.*

Timothy was to **instruct** the brethren.

**Phil 3:1** *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.*

Paul understood the **importance** of repetition when teaching people to live according to God's plan.

God intended His message to be written as a **continual** reminder.

**2 Peter 1:12-15** *For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, 14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.*

Peter spent his entire life **reminding** strong Christians to remain strong. He also promised that he would find a way to remind them after he **died**.

**2 Peter 3:1-3** *Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.*

Peter wrote a second letter to remind them to be **mindful** of the words they had already learned from the prophets, the apostles, and the Lord Himself. When we are not reminded we forget. When we forget we **fail**.

## Don't Get Sidetracked in Doctrine

**1 Tim 1:3-4** *As I urged you when I went into Macedonia — remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.*

Timothy was to command certain people to teach no other **doctrine**. When we leave sound doctrine we go after **fables** and endless genealogies. When we go after these things we fight instead of edify. We tear down instead of building up.

**1 Tim 4:1** *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...*

The Spirit says that some will depart from the faith and surrender to the doctrines of **demons**.

**Acts 20:28-31** *Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

Paul spent three years warning the Christians in Ephesus to watch out for savage wolves who speak **perverse** things.

**1 John 4:1** *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

John also warned Christians against the **inevitability** of false teachers causing some to depart from the truth.

**Matt 7:15-20** *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*

**Jesus** warned His followers to beware of false prophets. They won't be easy to recognize at first. You will need to examine their fruits.

**1 Tim 4:7** *But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness.*

**2 Tim 4:3-5** *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.*

**Titus 1:10,14** *For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision ... 14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.*

**Eph 4:14-15** *...that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...*

We are to **refuse** fables and exercise ourselves to godliness

We are not to give heed to fables and turn from the truth.

We are not to be carried about by the **trickery**, the cunningness, or the deceitful plotting of false teachers.

## Don't Get Sidetracked in Action

**1 Tim 1:5-11** *Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, 6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. 8 But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, 9 knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, 11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was **committed** to my trust.*

The purpose (end, result) of the commandment is love:

- from a **pure** heart. Pure – clean or free from defilement.
- from a **good** conscience. Good – a fertile soul or one inclined to goodness.
- from a **sincere** faith. Sincere – undisguised, no ulterior or concealed motives.

If we don't have a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith:

- we will turn aside to **idle** talk.
- we will try and teach the things we don't understand.
- we will turn aside to **sinful** behavior.
- we will need to be told not to murder, **lie**, or commit sexual immorality.

## Points we Considered

1. The Need for Constant Instruction and Reminders
2. Don't Get Sidetracked in Doctrine
3. Don't Get Sidetracked in Action

is a big factor (Hos. 4:6; Eph. 4:18). A failure to comply with 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Peter 3:15, or Ephesians 5:17 makes many people easy prey to all kinds of error and immorality; thus, their drifting away is assured. Preachers not preaching the whole truth on some subjects is another factor in drifting away from God (2 Tim. 4:2; Mk. 16:15; Acts 20:27). Apostolic preaching was distinctive preaching on all subjects; both the positive and negative truths received appropriate attention. Compromising the truth is closely related to not preaching the whole truth; and this serves as a stimulus in drifting away from God: We may accept a little error, overlook a little error, ignore a little error, tolerate a little error, or mix a little error with the truth; and, when we do this, we have already taken one or more steps in drifting away from God. When this compromising is done with reference to morals (1 Cor. 5), the current of drifting appears to be even swifter. In proportion to our bringing every thought into captivity to Christ (2 Cor. 10:4-5), the drifting may be reversed. There are those people who simply do not wish to live as Christians; they want all the advantages of Christians, but they seemingly have no interest in the attached obligations. All such need to study carefully the statement of Jesus in Matthew 16:24.

#### **The Ruin of Drifting Away From God**

If Nadab and Abihu could speak, what would be their advice (Lev. 10:1)? Do you think that the man who picked up sticks on the Sab-

bath day (Num. 15), if given a chance, would take that step again? Then, there is Moses (Num. 20), who in his anger smote the rock, and deprived himself of the promised land; his one step was one step too many. Ananias and Sapphira's brief stint at drifting was fatal to them (Acts 5). Demas loved this present world and forsook Paul (2 Tim. 4:10). The Jews, time and again, drifted away from God. After discussing some of their departures, the Hebrew writer says, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). The ruination of departing from God is so obvious that it ought not to be necessary to prove it to any concerned person.

#### **How To Prevent Drifting Away From God**

Our text says that we ought to give the "more earnest heed" to the things which we have heard, to the truth. All three of these words are necessary for us to get the full impact of the expression. The noun "heed" (prosecho) means "to hold to." The adjective "earnest" (spoudaios) suggests "to hasten." However, these are used in our text with the adverb "more" and literally says "more abundantly" (W.E. Vine, 551, 351-2). Surely we can see in all this some intense action, some real urgency; and, if we read the next two verses, we will see it as consistent action. As a part of this thought, we have 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor

is not in vain in the Lord." While these are not all that we might offer; yet, brethren, these are the basic ingredients for preventing our drifting away from God and his word. Anything less than these will make us easy prey to all sorts of departures.

#### **The Reward for Not Drifting Away From God**

This, of course, has an obvious answer(s). A crown of life (Rev. 2:1W; a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:6-8); an inheritance in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-5) — all, or each, of these are expressive of the promised reward. And, we are told that if we overcome we can share the Lord's throne with him (Rev. 3:21).

#### **Conclusion**

Brethren, let each of us examine himself closely (2 Cor. 13:5); and, let us do so in view of the possibility of our drifting away from God. Let us understand when this has happened, and let us immediately apply the remedy. Let us be thankful for those who call such to our attention. Let us remember that we have a hell to shun and a haven to gain; and, if we avoid the former and reach the latter, we must not drift away from God and his word.

Olen Holderby  
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# News and Notes

## Portage church of Christ

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Thanks for being here today! If you are visiting with us, feel free to ask any questions you have when services are over. We hope worshipping God with us benefits you. Our goal is to bring glory to the one who has promised us "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

We're on the Web!

See us at:  
[www.portagechurchofchrist.com](http://www.portagechurchofchrist.com)

**John Guerra** had the blockage in his fistula cleared out two weeks ago. The first doctor was unable to perform the surgery, but a second doctor successfully completed the surgery the next day.

**John Wilson** is having terrible back trouble. He is consulting with doctors about possible solutions. He may have to have back surgery.

**Gerry Gillins** has an appointment with a surgeon on December 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss his options concerning his gallstones.

**Denise Price** has been suffering from a severe sinus infection for several weeks. She is in a lot of pain.

**Jade Winland** is sick today preventing her and Mrs. Winland from being here today.

**Devin, Vicky's grandson,** is currently home and improving.

**Lana's aunt** is taking a new medicine that is starting to shrink the tumors. Thank God for her improvement.

**Debbie Hamilton,** Diana Gandy's sister, is home from the rehabilitation center and is still recovering from her recent back surgery.

**Harvey's mom** has bronchitis. She is currently in a nursing home and adapting well.

**Larry's dad** is in the hospital with an infection.

Continue to remember **Bill King, Kristy Scott, Linda Tuzinski, Scott Sandusky, Marge Newcomb, Retha Claxton, and Gail Gilliana** in your prayers.

### Keep Praying

**Steve Burdine** is still looking for a job. He has received modest

interest from a few companies lately. Pray that God will send him a good opportunity.

**Steve Sink** is continuing his job search. Pray for God to open up doors for Steve and give him the wisdom to make a good choice.

**Harvey Broyhill** is close to getting a position with the Portage school district. Harvey believes this will be a good job that meets his needs and wants.

**Justin Horn** lost his job when Hostess went out of business. He is in the beginning stages of his job hunt.

### Expecting...

**Laura and Brandon** are expecting a baby. Pray for them.