

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM
Singing every 2nd Sunday evening
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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“...Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica,”

—2 Timothy 4:10

**Servants during March:**

Songleader: Stanley (2), Larry (9),
 Dwight (16), Stanley (23), Larry (30)

Reading: Stanley

Announcements: Larry

Table: Mike M, Marty, Stanley

Wednesday Lesson: Stanley (5), Kris (12),
 Larry (19), Stanley (26)

Area Meetings:

Jackson Drive, 16-21, Steven McCrary;

Anderson, 16-19, Bill Hall;

Danville Road, 16-19, Jared Hagan

Hays Mill church of Christ

21705 Hays Mill Road

Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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How to Avoid Spiritual Failure

By Paul Earnhart

In his final hours in Rome, awaiting an inevitable execution, a very lonely apostle Paul suffered some additional heartbreak. “Demas,” he wrote, “hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,” 2 Tim 4:10. We are left to speculate as to the particulars—what dread fears or powerful allurements led this faithful friend and co-worker to abandon the kingdom of God and to forsake his burdened brother. It was not as though he had fled the field at the first approach of trouble. During Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome Demas had evidently been a steadfast companion, Phile 24; Col 4:14. Now, unexpectedly, this heart-mauling betrayal and desertion. Only those who have had a trusted companion in Christ—one who has proven himself in many a crisis—to suddenly turn from God and run for the world can understand. It can numb the spirit.

What is it that can cause one who has invested so much in the kingdom to suddenly abandon everything? Some fade early because they have little understanding of the calling of God and even less commitment. The first approach of temptation and hardship devastates them, Lk 8:13. Others seem to have a deep commitment to righteousness but not an absolute one. Their price for betrayal is high but they have one nonetheless, and when it gets high enough they run. The wealthy young ruler who came to Jesus was like that. He was willing to give up a lot, but not everything, Mt 19:16-23.


Paul said that Demas “loved this present world.” The “world” is many things. John describes it as a way of thinking where lust, materialism and pride abound, 1 Jn 2:15,16. What was it that got to the faithful Demas? Was it fear of death or imprisonment? Or was

it something more subtle like a nostalgic longing for the old easy ways free of constant unabating warfare? We are not told which one of these undid Demas but one of them found its mark.

Breaking points can come to us too if we are not very careful. A deep hurt we cannot find it in ourselves to forgive. A disappointing marriage. Failures with our children. Lost health or prosperity. Anything we had never imagined happening to us. And often it's just plain prideful stubbornness. At any rate, don't ever say you'd never do what others have done. You've never been all the places you could be. Peter learned a valuable lesson about that, Mt 26:31-35. It is far better that we know our own weaknesses and watch and pray that we enter not into temptation, Mt 26:41. Satan loves an arrogant and self-confident man.

Another lesson to be learned from the failure of others is that those who at last go back, at first look back. Departures of apparent suddenness are really the end of a process. Our Lord warned that those who put their hand to the kingdom plow and look back longingly at the world are not fit for the kingdom of God, Lk 9:62. The disciples who go back are those who first begin to cultivate again the values of the world and like the Israelites in the wilderness grow nostalgic amidst their trials for the fleshpots of Egypt. They forget, of course, the galling bondage that accompanies the life of sin. These are the ones who gradually cease to meditate upon God's word (Psa 1:1,2), then become prayerless (Jas 4:1,2), as God and Christ seem far away. First men cease to study, then to pray, and, finally, to care. Sometimes this all begins as a

casual flirtation, a few little compromises dismissed as harmless. Too much time with worldly companions, 1 Cor 15:33; too much interest in a job, 1 Tim 6:9,10; too much concern with being accepted and making our mark in the world, 1 Pet 5:5. Finally, it becomes a passionate love affair that makes us heedless of the injury we do to our Savior, ourselves and others.


Satan is the master of the "short step" method. Slow change is more effective in producing spiritual collapse than sudden departure. The danger of alerting the victim to what is happening is eliminated. We can be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, Heb 3:12,13. Warning flags need to start flying the moment we feel the slightest ebb in commitment. Beware the spiritual slow leak. The unfailing answer to this kind of spiritual failure is the daily discipline of an uncompromising dedication which admits of no exceptions and makes quick and humble redress for every transgression. Burn all your bridges and press on to the heavenly mark, Phil 3:7-14. And if, in spite of everything, you happen to stumble badly, don't let despair destroy you. Remember that everyone who has faltered has not ultimately fallen. We can all thank God for that. John Mark's disgraceful desertion in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13) was not the end of him because he didn't allow it to be. Paul sent for him during his last hours, 2 Tim 4:11, and the Holy Spirit chose him to record the gospel story. We don't have to be like Demas. In the mercy of God we have the privilege of being like John Mark or Peter, and, yes, even Paul. 

The Christian's Responsibility to Government

By C.E.W. Dorris

The Christian's relation to human government is plain. "Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience's sake," Rom 13:5. Christians are to "pay tribute" to human government and "render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor," Rom 13:6,7. The relationship of Christians to human governments is that of respectful submission, not of aggression. They must submit to "the powers that be." In no case are Christians justifiable in disobeying these powers, except only when civil governments require them to do that which God forbids, and forbid Christians doing that which God requires them to do. In such cases where human government or authority conflicts with God's authority, then, as Peter and John declare, we must obey God rather than men, or human authority, and take the consequences, Acts 4:19,20; 5:29. It matters not to the Christian whether a ruler is a good man or a bad man, the Christian is to respect

and obey all who are in authority, with the exception or limitation which has been mentioned. Christians are to obey "for the Lord's sake." This is the best motive that can be had by any one. Loyalty to Christ calls upon us to respect human authority, which God has ordained. It matters not whether the government be a monarchy, kingdom, republic, or democracy; it is all the same to a Christian who is to submit to "the powers that be." Neither does it matter to the Christian whether the ruler is a tyrant, a wicked man, or a good man; respectful obedience is to be given to the ruler by all Christians "for the Lord's sake." We are not to obey rulers because they are good men, nor refuse to obey them because they are bad men; neither are we to obey a law because it meets with our approval or disobey it because it does not meet with our approval. Our attitude is to be that of respectful submission "for the Lord's sake."

—From A Commentary On The Gospel Of Mark, Gospel Advocate Company, 1992, Mk 12:17, p283,284 

Remember in Prayer

Pam McNatt has some form of breast cancer. **Mike B** is now at Encompass rehabilitation! Please continue to pray for **Barbara; Betty;**

Carolyn; Deborah and Serenity; Hazel; Joshua V; Kathy M; Pam, Julie, Kaylee and Violet; Mark and Vickie H; and John, Sylvia, and Paige Pollard. 