

Why The Fallen Never Return

Introduction. Hebrews 6:4-6 is a much debated passage in New Testament scholarship. The warning in this passage was a real warning against a real danger, a danger which is still present so long as “an evil heart of unbelief” can result in “departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12).

The author forcefully argues that for the enlightened man, the process of falling away and of being restored again cannot continue indefinitely. It is impossible to renew him because his heart eventually turns cold — his condition is such that he can no longer leave his sin. It is impossible for him to be saved because he is incapable of turning to God. He is void of conscience and has lost his repenting apparatus. Why does this happen? What can people possibly love more than the Lord?

I. Love Of Approval

- A. The pressure to conform is great. Jesus calls us to be different, as seen in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12), while the world wants us to emulate it. Hence the apostolic warning to not conform (Romans 12:2; 1 Peter 1:14).
- B. Failure to be transformed makes conformity to the world certain. Christians who have become “weary” of “well doing” (Galatians 6:9) are susceptible to every kind of unrighteousness. Some cannot handle the ridicule, but Christians in the first century were told that you cannot please man and God (Galatians 1:10).

II. Love Of Sin

- A. The fact that sin is usually packaged as something attractive and enjoyable has long been a strong temptation in Satan’s arsenal (Genesis 3:6; Joshua 7:21). The fact that the gospel requires repentance is one of the main reasons people reject it, and it is also why many Christians who have yielded to the lusts of the flesh fall away and will not come back.
- B. The Bible describes the condition of those who have escaped the world but are again entangled in it (2 Peter 2:20-22; cp. Hebrews 10:38; 12:15; Revelation 2:4). Until one recognizes the true ugliness of sin (“gall of bitterness” and “bond of iniquity”, Acts 8:23), he will maintain a love of sin and not seek forgiveness.

III. Love Of Family

- A. While loving your family is good, such love cannot exceed our love for God. Jesus made it clear that in some cases one’s own household will be our enemies (Matthew 10:36-37; Luke 12:51-53; cp. Galatians 1:14).

- B. Hosts of people have been confronted with the gospel only to reject it because of misdirected love of family members. Likewise, some who have obeyed the gospel eventually leave the Lord to please their unbelieving family members. Little do they realize that the way to love them best is to be a faithful Christian (Luke 16:27-28).

IV. Love Of Ease

- A. "I just don't think I can live the life of a Christian" is the response we sometimes hear from people who have heard the gospel but rejected its invitation. This statement has serious implications because it is an indictment that God has commanded man to do the impossible. The gospel gives us the power to obey and be faithful (2 Corinthians 13:4; Ephesians 3:20; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 5:3).
- B. Those who fall away sometimes take a page from that playbook, claiming that they have tried, but have found it too difficult to be a Christian. The way of truth is not the path of least resistance, but instead of seeking the help of the Lord (Hebrews 13:5), or even help from fellow Christians who are ready and willing to warn, comfort, and support them (1 Thessalonians 5:14), they take the easy way out (cp. Proverbs 13:15).

V. Love Of Lies

- A. A perverted gospel is often more appealing than the truth. Perhaps that is the reason for Paul's emphatic warning to consider "accursed" any who preach another gospel than what was delivered (Galatians 1:6-9).
- B. The popular doctrines of "faith only" and "once saved, always saved" are two prime examples of "pleasing doctrines" that men love to believe despite the plain teaching of the apostles of Christ. When a Christian falls away it is not unusual to hear them talk of receiving "new light" or "new understanding" on the scriptures. In other words, they love lies (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). They need to be reminded of how God's inspired men foretold shame on unfaithful Israel (Psalm 4:2; Jeremiah 13:25-26).

Conclusion. As you have listened today, you may have been able to put a name with each reason — perhaps more than one name. How tragic it is to realize that men and women with whom we once shared close fellowship in the Lord have allowed their love for anything or anyone to "crucify ... the Son of God afresh ..." (Hebrews 6:6). Return to God and let the wickedness be cleansed from your heart.