

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Complacency

History has a way of repeating itself. Whether it is nations, families or individuals, if we do not learn the lessons from the past we are likely to fall into the same pitfall of complacency that will yield the same results of those who have preceded us.

Israel went through a common cycle that we as Christians go through at times. We come to Christ, we serve Christ, then we become complacent in our relationship with Christ and we fall away and quit serving God. God brings us back and we continue to repeat the cycle of faith to failure and back to faith.

In the book Judges chapter two we see three things that caused the Israelites to grow complacent in their spiritual lives and caused them to lose their enthusiasm for the plan and purpose that God had for them. We see the things they lost, the things they forget, and the things they changed.

I. Things they lost.

1) They lost their conviction about staying separated from sin.

There are two classes of sinfulness. The sins of omission and the sins of commission. These Israelites were guilty of both. The sin of omission is knowing what God wants us to do, but we refuse to do it. James 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin”. When we refuse to do what God is directing us to do we quench the spirit. First Thessalonians 5:19, “quench not the spirit.” Then there are the sins of commission. We know what we are actively doing is sin, but we go ahead and do it anyway. This grieves the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

2) They lost their conviction about being obedient to Gods

Word. God had told them exactly the battle plan. Trust Him, trust

His Word and follow His Word, but they stopped following Gods Word and soon they were in a state of confusion and defeat. Living the Christian life is not as complicated as we make it out to be. Sometimes we struggle over the issue of how to know Gods will. The fact is, we have Gods will in Gods word. The issue most of the time is not that we do not know what God wants us to do, but it is simply having the conviction to obey Gods word and trust it by faith.

II. The things they forgot.

1) They forgot who had delivered them and sustained them. It is vitally important that we pass on to the next generation Godly principles. The generation after Joshua's generation did not serve the Lord. I would say a probable reason they did not serve the lord is because their parents did not set the example of serving the Lord. They did not keep the vision and the message before their children and they raised a generation of young people who were never taught the history and the mighty working of the hand of God.

2) They forget where God had brought them from. The Israelites had been slaves in Egypt for 400 years and God miraculously delivered them across the Red Sea into the Promised Land, but they lost appreciation for what God had done for them. Equally, we must never forget what it is that Christ has done for us. His death on the cross has provided the sacrifice for sin and the means to a relationship with God.

III. Things they changed.

1) They changed their mission and their goals. They got their eyes off the goal of conquering the land to now becoming a part of its philosophy and customs. The Israelites became more interested in the material things that the land and its inhabitants could provide instead of being faithful to what God had given them to do.

2) They changed who they depended on for their sustenance. At first when Joshua led them across the Jordon River they were totally dependant upon God for their strength and power. Then they

became self sufficient, worldly, and no longer depended upon God.

This is a sad picture of a people that God so much wanted to bless and did bless until they turned their backs on God resulting in incredible heartache and suffering. We must realize that God has a plan and he is working his plan even when it all seems to be going wrong, but we just need to remain committed to His plan and God will bless. God wants to use us even with all of our problems and short comings if we will just stay true to Him.

In order to guard against the pitfalls of complacency keep your mind off the enamourments of the world and when challenges come your way claim Philippians 1:12 “the things that have happened unto me have fallen out for the furtherance of the Gospel.” Don’t ever grow complacent or disillusioned in your walk with Christ and God will use you to accomplish great things for Him.

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