
Spiritual Formation Part 22

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The Foundation of our Christian Faith Part 5

1 Kings 5:1 to 9:9; 2 Chronicles 3:3 to 5:1; 6:1-7:22; Psalm 118:18-27; 127:1; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-10

The Slippery Slope

The slope upon which we slip into a Church of Perfidy is the hill of compromise, where we weaken our beliefs and doctrines, and fail to love. Thus our Spiritual Formation is forsaken and the result is a life with little to no character Fruit or maturity. How does this happen? This can easily happen if we fail to apply Christ's Lordship and His guidelines to our lives.

- **Moving away from the obedience of God's Word.** The foundational error many Christians make is the rejection of God's Word as the authority for their lives. Or they do have reverence for His Word but it is not read or applied (Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 1:16; Titus 2:11-12; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:12). For a church, this is the kind of thinking that leads to the rejection of essential doctrines such as the deity of Christ, the Trinity, salvation by grace alone by faith alone, and so forth. This can be anything from outright rejection of the inerrancy of the Bible to just ignoring His Word and concentrating on other things. If we ever water down the Bible, thinking we can live an easier life, we delude ourselves. This is in essence saying that the Holy Spirit is not good enough or powerful enough and we must rely on ourselves. The Christian must get into the Word with passion, compassion and with conviction, with be under good Bible teaching with clarity and in truth—by pastors who do not compromise or dilute it. A Christian will stand or fall on the truth of His Word; ignore it and we will fail. If by some chance you seem successful, take careful heed; you are not being glorifying to Him. Even if we suffer financially and personally, we are not to ever, ignore God's most precious Word! Never, never, never! And, if I have not made my point yet, here is another— **never!**
- **The failure to love.** Christians fail because they forget that Christ is the Ultimate LOVE! He gives us the ultimate assurance! We have incredible assurance that nothing can separate us from God's love. Thus, if God is for us, then we need not fear anything such as trials, troubles, problems, setbacks, highs, lows, the devil, or even death. There should be no reason in our lives to keep us from growing in His love and living the triumphant, full Christian life, full of passion and conviction in serving for the glory of our Lord, no matter what we have been through or will go through! Our failure to obey God by not loving Him and others will cause us to lose out on so much in life and in eternity. Our diligence to remain faithful and obedient with virtue will help enable others to do so, too. When we obey God, He will reward us beyond our ability to fathom. The solution is simple; pay attention

to Christ, not to falsehoods or pride (Psalm 86:5; 145:4-13; Rom. 8:31-39; 1 Cor. 13).

- **Not being good.** Goodness is the Fruit with which virtue and the rest of the characters combine to produce endearment. It is the character that makes people liked and even loved by others. When we as a Christian are not being good, such as refusing to care, being unforgiving, not operating in the Spirit and Fruit, it leads to dissention and strife. When we fight against one another, we have to see how hurtful and even pathetic it is in God's eyes! By the Spirit's empowerment, we can model the character of Christ. We can be positively responsive to others; God is concerned with how we are with one another as well as how we are with Him. We readily confess our faithfulness on Sunday, but by Monday, our confession is gone. We desire God to be a blessing machine, while we are impatient and disrespectful to what He wants us to learn. When we have confidence in God and in His plan and purpose for our lives, we can then act on faith (Prov. 25:22; Matt. 7:12; 19:16; Luke 6:27, 35; Rom. 8:28-39; 12:17; 2 Cor. 5:20; 1 Pet. 3:11; 2 Pet. 1:2-12).
- **Prayer is seen as a last resort.** The Christian who is not praying has the mindset that we want to direct our life our way, without His help. This is independent thinking that is away from God, with the belief that this is maturity and progress. In fact, this is regress and apostasy. Sounds like, *who would do that?* Well, most Christians with whom I have worked with the last ten-plus years that are having difficulties in life also had no to little prayer life. Perhaps some liturgy and ceremonial prayers in church may be spoken, but not the heartfelt seeking of God. Real prayer starts in the home of the heart; then with others we come together to pray. A real Christian must always seek His face reverently and passionately! If we try to run our lives without prayer, we are running them without our Cornerstone. We cannot do His call, His work, or our Christian life without His lead and relationship. Prayer must be utmost and foremost for His purpose to be in our lives and churches.
- **Embracing the postmodern mindsets of apathy or political correctness.** Our virtue leaves us when we start to reject moral absolutes and forsake accountability to our Lord. This forms a void that we fill with all kinds of things meant to fulfill people's "felt needs" except solid Christian formation that is essential for their "real needs."
- **Forgetting about discipleship and replacing it with our pride or Laziness.** We can easily become the problem as our lust for money, work, power, or sex supersedes our call and ability to be equipped and nurtured. This means we are neglecting Him to chase after worldly pursuits or ideas and thus, we create a shallow Christian life with a compromised faith. When we fail to be disciplined we will fail to honor God, obey His imperatives, and serve Him. Thus, we are failing His call and our real purpose (Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:11).
- **Not following Christ!** As a pastor, I can testify to you, that if you are serious

about Christ you must ask yourself, *how is my pride level?* What about *my busyness and attitude?* If we compromise or are not being disciplined or be under good teaching, or operating in the Spirit and Fruit, we will be failing. If so, you must repent, drop to your knees, seek His face, and get rid of anything that gets in the way to comply with His Way. We must get rid of the weeds to grow healthy wheat and, of course, do it in love and in Matthew 18.

Questions

1. Have you ever had a fear of a natural disaster or other things such as trials, troubles, problems, setbacks, the devil, or even death? What did you do to overcome this fear if you did?
2. Usually when we prepare our best for a disaster we are at more ease and ready when it comes. How is this so with our spiritual growth?
3. What causes you to forget about spiritual growth? Are any of these things good? Such as being so involved in your church you are not involved in Christ?
4. How does the obedience of God's Word empower your Spiritual Formation?
5. How is your pride level? What about your busyness and attitude?
6. What happens when we water down the Bible, thinking we can live an easier life?
7. How will a Christian stand or fall on the truth of His Word? Have you ever experienced that when you ignored the Bible you failed? How so?
8. How do you feel that you have an incredible assurance that nothing can separate you from God's love?
9. How can you have a life that is full of passion and conviction in serving for the glory of our Lord, no matter what we have been through or will go through?
10. What happens in a church when we refuse to care, being unforgiving, not operating in the Spirit and Fruit? How have you seen these tendencies lead to dissension and strife?
11. How have you seen goodness (the Fruit) operate? How have you used Fruit to have character and to produce endearment?
12. What can you do to pay attention to Christ, not to falsehoods, over busyness or pride?