



The Northpoint Lighthouse

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WHY SOME PEOPLE QUIT

Ever since the church began, some who have obeyed the Gospel, thus being added by the Lord to the church, have failed to remain faithful. They, like the Ephesians, “have left their first love” (Rev. 2:4). Likely, there are some motivations for departures with which I am not familiar, but some are very apparent. Some apostatize because they cease to value Truth and become ensnared in false doctrines and practices (2 The. 2:10–12; 1 Tim. 1:19–20; 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:3–4; et al.). Others hear the siren-call of fleshly lusts and, unlike Moses, choose to enjoy the “pleasures of sin for a season,” forgetting the inevitable day of recompense (Heb. 11:25–26; 1 Cor. 5:1–5; 2 Cor. 12:21; 2 Tim. 3:1–6; Jude 4; et al.).

Others who drop out do not do so because of such drastic factors. They depart for what one might refer to as more “personal” or “subjective” reasons, several of which I have heard over the years. In hopes that discussion of some of these might prevent someone from backsliding and losing his soul, consider the following:

- 1. Guilt:** When one knows he is not living as Christ teaches us to live during the week, he should feel guilty and ashamed when he comes into his Bible class or into the worship assembly. His guilt and shame leave him with two choices: He can confess and repent of his sin, or he can continue in it. One who continues in sin will not long faithfully assemble where Biblical preaching and teaching remind him of his guilt. If he is unwilling to abandon his sin, he will abandon the church by making no pretense at being religious or he will “shop around” for a “feel-good church” with a “feel-good gospel” (joining a “guilt-free church” that allows people to maintain membership and hold on to their sins is merely another way of abandoning the Truth—and the church). Unwillingness to give up sin (and the resulting guilt) has caused many to “quit the church.”
- 2. Personal dislike for someone in the congregation:** Often it is the preacher, an elder, or a teacher—usually someone in a leadership role—who stirs such disfavor. We all have enough faults to be unlikable to someone else at times (e.g., I do not like the behavior of those who quit because they do not “like” someone). Guess what? You do not have to **like** every member of the church to be a faithful Christian (nor does everyone in the congregation have to **like** you). God must often dislike the behavior of even the best of us, but He still

loves us and desires our salvation. Likewise, it is not necessarily wrong for us to dislike and irritate one another at times in matters of opinion and personal choice, as long as we still love one another enough to seek the good of each other. "Quitting the church," thereby losing one's soul, is a high price to pay because "I do not like someone."

- 3. The claim of "too many hypocrites" in the church:** Perhaps all Christians (including preachers and elders) have at least been inconsistent, if not hypocritical at times. Even the best find it impossible to live flawlessly the flawless message we preach. I dare say that the one who charges, "There are too many hypocrites," is himself hypocritical once in a while. There is no defense for hypocrisy, but which is worse—to continue to faithfully assemble and work with other imperfect saints, knowing that one's own life is not perfect, or to drop out and lose one's soul? Besides, the presence of one or one hundred hypocrites has nothing to do with one's relationship with God unless he allows it to do so. Hell will be the eternal abode of impenitent hypocrites (Mat. 24:51). The one who so despises them here that he departs from the Lord rather than associate with them will condemn himself to inescapable association with them in eternity.

Many other "reasons" for quitting are observable, but they all stem from uncontrolled selfishness (Rom. 15:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:15; Phi. 2:4, 21; 2 Tim. 3:2). The quitter will return only when he gets selfishness under control.

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