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THE BIBLE VIEW

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Drifting Away

Bill Brinkworth

The battle for living a godly life does not end when one is saved. It begins when one trusts Christ as Saviour, especially if one is determined to live an obedient, Christian life.

Some succumb to the temptations of this world and lose their love for the things of God. Demas, spoken of in II Timothy 4, was one such causality.
"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia." II Timothy 4:10

For a while, Demas was a faithful fellow laborer in Christ (Col. 4:14, Philemon 1:24) alongside Paul. Paul relied on Demas to help reach the lost. Like countless millions, however, the allure of this world caught Demas' eye and lured him away from his main purpose in life.

Since I have been saved, I have seen many Demases. They got saved and started sitting next to us in a pew. They never missed preaching.

When the doors of the church were opened, they were there. As the preacher preached, they jotted down what was said as fast as possible. Their marked Bible was evidence that they read the Word of God quite often. Conversations with them indicated they had a consistent prayer life.

Then, a downward decline started. A once faithful believer missed one church service. It was not long until another was missed. Soon, only one service a week was attended, and then their pew was permanently empty.

A visit to their home revealed that, like Demas, their priorities had changed. No longer was pleasing the Lord their number one goal. Faithfulness to Him had been replaced by a new job,

girlfriend, hobby, or sport. Like a fish tempted by a shiny, fluttering lure, they had gotten hooked by something the world offered. They were soon out of a lifestyle purposing to obey the Lord.

"Drifting away" from living a God-pleasing life can happen to any Christian. It may begin when one reads the Bible and does not get excited about what was read or by sitting through church and not getting anything out of it. It can be a spiritually downhill slide when one has too many spiritual "used-to-does".

When those temptations come, do as Paul did; fight the "good fight" (II Tim. 4:7). Fight any change from doing right. It may be a lifelong struggle. If you fail, get back up and do what you used to do. Finish the course (II Tim. 4:7). Its benefits are everlasting!

"When a man who professes to be converted says that he goes into the world and sin for pleasure, it is as if an angel went to Hell for enjoyment."

— C. H. Spurgeon

Shame! Shame!

Bill Brinkworth

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." Ephesians 5:11-12

The Bible commands Christians to keep far away from the luring grasp of sin. We are not only to do our best not to commit sin and avoid those involved in it, but we are not even to talk about the iniquities in which others are involved.

This last principle has been ignored by most, and the opposite is practiced. Many, instead of obeying God's command, "educate" the masses about certain behavior. Their hopes are often that knowledge of the side effects of certain socially unacceptable practices, often what the Bible identifies as sin, will help people stay away from them. Unfortunately, education about something one should not do frequently stimulates an interest in trying to do that very thing.

Programs to educate youth about not doing drugs quite often put the ideas in their minds about doing them and show them how to do something they would never have known about if they had not been shown how or introduced to it by "education". The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D. A. R. E.), a publicly-funded program that uses law enforcement resources to help children resist drugs and gangs, illustrates this fact.

Instead of reducing the number of children involved in those things, it has been found that there has been an increase in their involvement in drugs and gangs. The Family Council of Drug Awareness reported, "Since its curriculum (D. A. R. E.'s) went national, two patterns have emerged: more students now do drugs, and they start using drugs at an earlier age." Education about something that should not be discussed often increases the practice, not decreases it.

Billions of dollars of taxpayers' money have been spent over the decades to give young people a sex education under the guise that knowledge will help them keep from making "mistakes." Instead, education about sex has increased and encouraged its practice at an early age before marriage.

Birth rates quickly prove this fact. In 1950, when sex outside marriage was not openly talked about, especially in the school curriculum, birth rates for unmarried women were about 30 per 1,000. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported that the birth rate has decreased from previous years. However, it is now over 450 per 1,000 unmarried women. The CDC also noted that abortions in 1970 were 10 per 1,000 and increased to over 70 per 1,000, not including the effects of growing usage of birth control, including the day-after "emergency" birth control drugs. Again, education about not doing something has become a "how-to" and an invitation to "do."

Other once unwelcomed behaviors are also on the increase. There was a time when few even knew a divorced couple; now, it is difficult to find couples that have not been divorced. Perhaps the exposure in movies and television about divorce and adultery has made a once feared occurrence a ho-hum common one.

Homosexuality, imprisonment, poor parenting, lack of respect for Christianity, crime, and hosts of other once frowned-upon activities are common in public-school lesson plans and media "entertainment," that they have lost their social stigma and are now acceptable and even encouraged in some areas. Knowledge of what was once taboos again has contaminated society by going against God's commandment to discuss something that should not even be whispered about.

The world often defends its efforts in "educating" by belittling God's commandments and labeling it as making the masses willfully ignorant or "censoring the truth." The truth, however, is that in most situations, speaking of practices that should not be committed only puts the idea in one's head. It does not take much thought to develop the idea to, "I'll just try it this once". Once it is experienced, inhibitions are worn away, and a more frequent practice is easily accomplished.

The human brain is an amazing organ. It seldom completely forgets something to which it has been exposed. Conversation about doing improper things often is where the idea to commit them originates.

God's wisdom warns us not even to talk about sin because it will not be long until you are neck-deep in it — paraphrased, of course. God's commandments are always the best. If heeded, they will keep you from the hurtful consequences of sin.

"You are free to choose, but you are not free from the consequences of your choice."
— *Barbara Brinkworth*

Don't Dig It Up!

Salters, 1871

Worms and other insects take up their habitation under the surface of the Earth. A plot of ground may be outwardly covered with grass and decorated with flowers. Take a spade in your hand and turn up the solid ground, and you soon have a sample of the creatures and filth that lurk beneath. Temptation is the spade that breaks up the ground of a believer's heart and helps him discover the corruptions of his fallen nature.

"In diving to the bottom for pleasures, we bring up more gravel than pearls."

\- *Spurgeon.*

Tested before Deemed Trustworthy

C. H. Spurgeon

A further reason why you are tempted and tried is that God, in His wise providence, is testing you to see whether you are fit for His work. Before a firearm is sold, it is taken to the proof shop.

It is loaded with a charge, perhaps four or five times heavier than it will ever have to carry at the ordinary sportsman's hand. The barrels are filled, and no great hurt is done if they burst in the proof house. However, it would be exceedingly dangerous if they should burst in the hands of some unskilled man in the field.

God often tests His servants. Some that He will make special use of are put to the "proof house." Perhaps they are loaded with five times more temptations than any person should ordinarily endure so that God may see and prove to onlookers that they are fit for His Divine service.

We have heard that the old warriors before they would use their swords, would bend them across their knees. They had to see whether the weapons had the right stuff before they would venture into battle with them. God does this with His servants.

If it had not been for the devil, Martin Luther had never been the Martin Luther he was. The devil was, as it were, the proof house for Martin Luther. One must be tried and tempted before he becomes fit for the Master's use.

"God doesn't give us what we can handle; God helps us handle what we are given."