

QUESTION: Leon, I am struggling with some things in my faith. There was a time when I felt so close to God and loved worshiping with God's people, but something changed. I feel like I've drifted far away from God and that if I died as I am I would be lost, yet I just can't seem to get myself back to a place where I feel close to God and confident about my eternity with Him. What can I do?

Answer: I appreciate your honesty. It is so easy to allow the devil to get into our hearts and suck the joy, enthusiasm, and fire for God right out of our lives. Think with me about two Scriptures that deal with the very problem you are facing. In Hebrews 2:1-4 it says, "We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him, God also testified to it by signs, wonders, and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will."

Notice the people had been right with God but had drifted, ignoring God's word to them. One of the greatest challenges we face in our service to God is to keep the fire burning bright in us. It is so easy to become lukewarm and simply drift away from the Lord. Picture yourself out on a fishing boat focused on trying to catch as many fish as you possibly can, but suddenly realizing you have drifted far from where you started and aren't sure where you are any longer. We can do the same thing in our faith and service to God. The devil loves it when he can plant seeds of doubt, fear, and distrust into our minds. If he can stop us from studying God's word, spending time in prayer to the Father and in fellowship with other Christians, he can win us away from the Lord without us even being aware of what is happening. Notice the answer God gave these Christians who had drifted. "Pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what you have heard." Get back into

reading and studying His word. Pray for wisdom, understanding, forgiveness, and a fresh start. Get back into the fellowship of the church. Later in this same book of Hebrews he pleaded with them to draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings (Hebrews 10:22). He told them to hold unswervingly to their hope (Verse 23). And to consider one another in how we can spur one another on in love and good deeds (Verse 24). Then in verse 25 he said, "Not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the day approaching." Satan loves it when we decide we don't need to gather with the church and can live for the Lord without others. But God planned for us to lean on each other and encourage each other.

The other text is Revelation 2:1-7 when Jesus wrote to the church at Ephesus. He started by bragging on them and how they had endured in their faith. But in verse 4 he said, "Yet I hold this against you: you have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen; repent and do the things you did at first." He went on to warn them if they didn't repent and make things right, he would take away their lampstand as his church. When we lose our commitment, we had in the first, God's challenge is to REMEMBER, REPENT AND DO WHAT WE DID AT THE FIRST. Remember what it was like to be on fire for God, growing in your faith, talking to others about Him and enjoying being part of the church together. To repent is to change your mind or heart and head in a different direction. It isn't just asking God to forgive or feeling sorry for what you have done, but beginning to do the things you did before when you were on fire for God.

God's love and grace toward you haven't backed off at all. He longs to see you growing and serving in His kingdom with all your heart. Start today!