

Why do people fall away?

By Allen Webster

If we can determine why people fall away, perhaps we can head them off at the pass. Who among those currently attending will not be in their pew six months from now? A year? Five years?

Some were never truly converted. Some were baptized only to please an insistent fiancé or to make peace in the family, but never really saw the spiritual need for it. Jesus spoke of the seed falling on stony ground (Matthew 13:5, Matthew 13:20). This person readily receives the Gospel when the circumstances are favorable, but just as readily drops it when the wind blows the other way. In such shallow soil (character), the seed of the Gospel comes to rest, to flourish, but then withers and dies, as ungodly people turn up the heat or uninviting life trials make God seem far away. This is a person who goes to a Gospel meeting or Christian youth camp and gets caught up in the moment when several respond to be baptized. On Sunday, he excitedly joins them, but on Monday, back on the job when his friends ridicule his newfound faith, he just as readily discards his day-old religion. Or perhaps he makes it for a while, but the wilting plant will never survive to produce a fruit for the harvest. Charles Spurgeon said, sometimes converts who are born in excitement die when the excitement is over. They are like certain insects which are the product of an exceedingly warm day and die when the sun goes down. He continued, "Give me the godliness which flourishes upon Calvary, rather than upon Vesuvius."

Some neglect their salvation and wander away. Why do Christians backslide? Is it because God offended them? Do they not care that Jesus died for them? Do they think that hell isn't hot anymore? Did they decide that they really didn't want to go to heaven anyway? Sometimes a brother is quickly overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1), but usually one leaves God as the result of slow, gradual spiritual decline. The verb *err* (planethe) in James 5:19 means to wander, and suggests a gradual moving away from God's will, like a sheep slowly grazing away from its flock. Unless the believer stays close to the Lord's truth, he will start to drift away from the Lord.

The devil is much too crafty to confront us with an ultimatum. He does his deceitful and damning work a little at a time (2 Corinthians 11:3). The Holy Spirit cautioned, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1). The phrase let them slip (*parrhúeo*) is interesting. It suggests that our faith may leak out as a liquid from a cracked vessel. In Bible times, a family's water supply was brought to their house from the city well or other nearby source since there was no running water in homes. This was usually done the night before so impurities could settle while the family slept. Occasionally, one of the clay pots would develop a hairline fracture and the family would wake up to an empty vessel and a wet floor. The vessel was just as empty as if it had been kicked over and

Prayers and Concerns

- ◆ Our sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Bonnie Ruth Ebrite. She is the mother of Greg Ebrite and Janet Taber and was a member here for many years. Her service was yesterday.
- ◆ Logan Hillhouse is having blood work done and an Epinephrine study on Monday at Children's Mercy, KC. He will either get a new prescription or an internal defibrillator installed. Good news is that he will not have to wear the life vest anymore.
- ◆ Stetson Pleasant will have surgery on his feet December 19th.
- ◆ Remember those with health issues—Dale Strong, Aleta Collins, Vernon James, Ruth Strain, Bob Robbins, Coe Hamm.
- ◆ All those battling cancer—Ricky Langston, Lisa Langston, Tiffany Pleasant, Amy Myers, Don Luna, Jim Kirkland, Wayman King, Donna Shipley, Elaine Hunter (Larry's sister), Dawn (Chris Lemburg's sister), Lionel Daugherty, Jana Crisp, Richard Blackburn, Jenny James, Debbie Eslinger, Sharon Fox, Bill Agee, Joy Cutbirth.
- ◆ GHCC: Virginia Hambelton, Delphia Holmes. Clifford Lansdown at Hiram Shaddox; Wilbern Uchtman at Brook Haven.
- ◆ Homebound: Vernon James, Steve Siebels, Mary Piepergerdes.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

ISAIAH 41:10 (NIV)

God will keep you from falling

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

Jude 1:24

Friends,
God is strong and can keep you from falling, and will bring you before His glory without any wrong in you and with great joy.

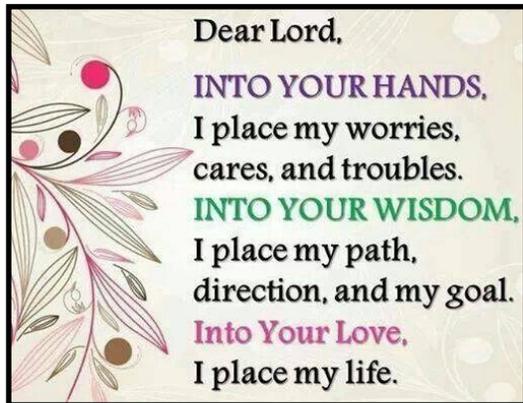
spilt all at once. Our faith is like that. We don't usually lose our religion all at once, slam the door to the church building, vowing never to return. We don't just get up one morning and say, "I quit the church; I'll never go to another service; I will live a life of sin." We usually start by missing an occasional Wednesday night, then every Wednesday, then getting up late and missing the Sunday class; then all of them, then occasionally we skip a Sunday morning, until finally someone looks around and says, "What ever happened to... uh, oh, what was his name?"

(continued next week)

Birthdays		Anniversaries	
12-6	Don Luna (80)	12-9	Bill and Lana Cockrum
12-9	Pat Kirkland	12-31	Don and Karin Reynolds
12-9	Jim Lane	Birthdays	
12-10	David Stevens	12-14	Joe Walrath
12-10	Kenneth Workman	12-15	Dana Crisp
12-13	Dale Strong	12-21	Kim Anderson
12-13	Hope Hillhouse	12-25	Jessica Smith
12-14	Corey Hillhouse	12-27	Granger Stevens

Vicki is serving soup and dessert for our Wednesday night fellowship supper. Bible classes will follow.

Date	Event	Details
Monday, Dec. 22, 7 p.m.	Christmas Play	Kids presenting play



December Worship Assignments

Welcome & Shepherd's Prayer

Communion & Closing Prayer

12-7 John Abraham
 12-14 Mark Lane
 12-21 David Stevens
 12-28 Don Luna

D. E. Pleasant
 Dana Crisp
 Matt Kyle
 R. J. Moyers

Song Leader: Titus Smith
Greeters: John and Melinda Abraham

The Family News

December 7, 2025

Gainesville Church of Christ

PO Box 7, 23550 US Hwy. 160, Gainesville, MO 65655
www.gainesvillechurchofchrist.org

A Place to Call Home

We welcome you and are so glad you could worship with us today.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

9:30 a.m. Bible Classes for All Ages

10:30 a.m. Worship Service: ***You Don't Have to Stumble***

Wednesday

6 p.m. Fellowship Supper

7 p.m. Bible Classes for all ages

Sunday Worship Outline

Welcome and Shepherd's Prayer

Kids Singing up Front

Worship God by Singing Praises

Communion Service

Song before Sermon

Sermon and Invitation

Invitation Song

Closing Song and Prayer

Offering baskets are located at the back.

We are a community of redeemed sinners who are following Jesus Christ, proclaiming the gospel of grace, loving our Lord and one another.

Elders

Mark Lane 417-679-4835
 Don Luna 417-712-1945
 David Stevens 417-679-4700
 John Abraham 870-421-5632

Deacons

Larry Butler 817-504-1604
 Dana Crisp 417-331-5090
 James Langston 870-315-4355

Preacher

Halbert Smith 417-257-3880

Ministers: Every Member—Each One of Us