

'Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing'

In my last two articles we've been looking at Hebrews 2:1-4, seeking to address the real danger of spiritually drifting off course in our Christian lives. We've seen that we have a desperate need to stay close to Christ through his word as well as being connected to a healthy, local Church (Hebrews 10:25; 1 Timothy 3:15). When the word of God was neglected in the Old Testament, the people were punished. The writer of Hebrews teaches us that we, too, will be punished if we neglect God's great salvation (the context allows for: eternal damnation for non-believers because of their persistence in turning away from the gospel of Jesus Christ or Fatherly discipline for true believers). We have everything that we need to keep us from neglect and spiritual drift. With the word of God to guide us and the Holy Spirit to enable us, we must continue to run the race of holiness and faithfulness or we will surely drift. Don't ever make the mistake of thinking that spiritual drift could never happen to you.

There's a well-known hymn entitled, "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," written in 1758 by a man named Robert Robinson. Robinson was converted under the ministry of the great revivalist preacher, George Whitfield. He became a pastor and had a fruitful ministry but sadly, over a period of time, he began neglecting his spiritual life. As you might imagine he had no true peace in his life at this time (Isaiah 26:3-4) so, hoping to make himself feel better, he decided to get away from his normal routine. During his travels, he briefly encountered a young woman who was clearly a mature Christian. In a conversation with Robinson she reportedly handed him a hymnal (some say she was humming the hymn) and said, "What do you think of this hymn?" Robinson tried to avoid her question as he looked at the words of the very hymn that he, himself, had written. The first verse begins, "Come, thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace; streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise..." After a time, when Robinson could contain his emotions no longer, he told this woman who he was and how he had been drifting away from the Lord. She tenderly responded, "Those 'streams of mercy' are still flowing." Robinson would later confess his sinfulness, receive forgiveness and be restored to fellowship with God.

This story reminds us that anyone, even ministers of the gospel, can drift off course. Our salvation is all of grace and not works and yet, those who are truly saved must, by grace, be intentional about our Christian lives or we, too, may drift. Thinking beyond our own life, what is our responsibility toward a brother or sister in Christ if we should see them drifting away from God? Below is just a sampling of scriptural guidance that will help us in this area.

—Genuine Love: "Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection..." (Romans 12:9-10). We should all, ".....care for one another. If one member suffers, we all suffer together..." (1 Corinthians 12:25-26) Can we honestly say we love our brother or sister in Christ if we refuse to reach out to them in their time of need?

—Lovingly encourage them toward godliness: "And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all." (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

—Pray diligently for their spiritual growth: “And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Colossians 1:9-10)

May God help us to take this warning against spiritual drift very seriously, not only for ourselves, but also for our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.

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