

How to Avoid a Spiritual Failure

Earnhart, Paul

In his final hours in Rome, awaiting an inevitable execution, a very lonely apostle Paul suffered some additional heartbreak. "Demas," he wrote, "hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (2 Timothy 4.10). We are left to speculate as to the particulars — what dread fears or powerful allurements led this faithful friend and co-worker to abandon the kingdom of God and to forsake his burdened brother. It was not as though he had fled the field at the first approach of trouble. During Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, Demas had evidently been a steadfast companion (Philemon 24; Colossians 4.14). Now, unexpectedly, this heart-mauling betrayal and desertion.

Paul said that Demas "loved this present world." The "world" is many things. John describes it as a way of thinking where lust, materialism and pride abound (1 John 2.15-16). What was it that got to the faithful Demas? Was it fear of death or imprisonment? Or was it something more subtle like a nostalgic longing for the old easy ways free of constant warfare? We are not told which one of these undid Demas but one of them found its mark.

Breaking points can come to us too if we are not very careful. A deep hurt we cannot find it in ourselves to forgive. A disappointing marriage. Failures with our children. Lost health or prosperity. Anything we had never imagined happening to us. And often it's just plain prideful stubbornness. At any rate, don't ever say you'd never do what others have done. You've never been all the places you could be. Peter learned a valuable lesson about that (Matthew 26.31-35). It is far better that we know our own weaknesses and watch and pray that we enter not into temptation (Matthew 26.41). Satan loves an arrogant and self-confident man.

Another lesson to be learned from the failure of others is that those who at last go back, at first look back. Departures of apparent suddenness are really the end of a process. Our Lord warned that those who put their hand to the kingdom plow and look back longingly at the world are not fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9.62). The disciples who go back are those who first begin to cultivate again the values of the world and like the Israelites in the wilderness grow nostalgic amidst their trials for the fleshpots of Egypt. They forget, of course, the galling bondage that accompanies the life of sin. These are the ones who gradually cease to meditate upon God's word (Psalm 1.1-2), then become prayerless (James 4.1-2) as God and Christ seem far away. First men cease to study,

then to pray, and, finally, to care.

Sometimes this all begins as a casual flirtation, a few little compromises dismissed as harmless. Too much time with worldly companions (1 Corinthians 15.33), too much interest in a job (1 Timothy 6.9-10), too much concern with being accepted and making our mark in the world (1 Peter 5.5). Finally, it becomes a passionate love affair that makes us heedless of the injury we do to our Savior, ourselves and others.

Satan is the master of the "short step" method. Slow change is more effective in producing spiritual collapse than sudden departure. The danger of alerting the victim to what is happening is eliminated. We can be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3.12-13). Warning flags need to start flying the moment we feel the slightest ebb in commitment. Beware the spiritual slow leak.

The unfailing answer to this kind of spiritual failure is the daily discipline of an uncompromising dedication which admits of no exceptions and makes quick and humble redress for every transgression. Burn all your bridges and press on to the heavenly mark (Philippians 3.7-14). And if, in spite of everything, you happen to stumble badly, don't let despair destroy you. Remember that everyone who has faltered has not ultimately fallen. We can all thank God for that. John Mark's disgraceful desertion in Pamphylia (Acts 13.13) was not the end of him because he didn't allow it to be. Paul sent for him during his last hours (2 Timothy 4.11) and the Holy Spirit chose him to record the gospel story. We don't have to be like Demas. In the mercy of God we have the privilege of being like John Mark or Peter, and, yes, even Paul.

PLACE OF WORSHIP
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'KHRIS' SUANGPHUM, A WEEKLY BULLETIN FOR
 THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, DELHI,
 ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK'

Enkaitu : Jamson Guite

BIBLE CLASS
Class **Teacher**
 Adult : James, Siamkhanmuan
 Inter. : Biakmang & Jamson
 Junior : Minlun & Chiinpi
 Primary : Vungngaihkim & Suanlian
 Beginner : Chingkhanlun & Rosely

**TOUPA NI'
 THILPIAK**

Date 30.06.2024 ₹ 52,690 /-

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

**"Aw Toupa, mihing omdan bel, amah thu lel ahikei
 chih ka theita hi: mihing a kalsuan amah kipi hilou hi
 (Jeremia 10:23)**

THU TUAMTUAM

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Biakna Hunzeek

Toupa' Ni

Date 07.07.2024

Hun-uk thumna : Thongginlian
 Lapi : Siamkhanmuan
 Thilpiak : Thangbiaklun
 Theihgigena : Kamkhenthang
 Thugen : Jamson
 Thumna : Thanglianxhup

Midweek online Bible Class

Date 3.07.2024

Thumna : Thongginlian
 Sinsaktu : Chuck Horner
 Thumna : Pausuanlian

Kiginni

Date 13.07.2024

Hun-uk thumna : Thangzalam
 Lapi : Siamkhanmuan
 Thugen : Lamsuanmung
 Thumna : Gin Samuel

Toupa' Ni

Date 14.07.2024

Hun-uk thumna : Thangzalam
 Lapi : Siamkhanmuan
 Thilpiak : Pauminlun
 Theihgigena : Janglet
 Thugen : James
 Thumna : Kammuanlal

ZOHSIANG HITA

☛ Ni li sung tonic sofa zil ahih-
 nung in kal paita Toupa ni nitaklam
 dak 3 vel in zohsiang in omta hi. Un-
 aute tamtak kitel ahihman in tamtak
 in naktak a phatuampih ngei diing a
 lamet ahi. Zilsaktu hon vaikhak bang
 in abu pansan in ei leh ei kizil toutou
 lai ni hang.

SUTZOP HINAWNTA DIING

☛ June kha sung pulum Toupa Ni
 bible class khawl ahihning in tuni in
 ngeina bang in pat hinawnta diing. Ei-
 mah class chiat a tel diing leh ahun lap
 ngeingei diing in kuan chiat ni.

MEETING OM DIING

☛ Lemlounha dang ahong omthak
 keileh ahong tung diing tu kiginni chi-
 ang in gelkholhsa bang in unaupa
 Kamkhenthang inn, Chanakyapuri ah
 Saptuam business meeting neih hi-
 nawn diing. Unaupa Pasalte'n ngaik-
 hok in tel i sawm chiat diing uh.

INN LUAHNA KISUAN

☛ A inn luahna uh toh kisai a thu
 leh la a om ziak in unaunu Liannem-te
 kal paisa sung in Moti Bagh apan in
 Bersarai ah ana kisuankhia uhi. Huai ah
 innluah in omtadih diing uhi.

NGAPLOU UH

☛ Unaupa Thongginlian hitang
 khosik ziak in ngaplou in ni thum lam
 ana om mahleh Pathian ompihna toh
 dam in office leng kai zouta. Miss
 Hatching d/o unaupa Khamminthang
 leng hitang khosik ziak mah in ngaplou
 in ana om hi.

Huan, unaupa Sei Robert leng
 sungkhoh santen ziak in ngaplou in ni
 thumlam bang ana omta. Damsiang
 taktak thei nailou lai. Damloute thum-
 na ah phawk ni.

HONG TUNGTHAK

☛ Delhi a om diing in New Lamka
 apan in unaunu Linda Chiinlianmoi d/o
 unaupa Haukhanson hongzin hi. Delhi
 a om diing ahihziak in Preacher kiang
 ah thu omdan hilh pah in kal paita in-
 leng biakna ah hongtel thei hi. Hiai
 bang a Saptuamte kiang a kithehsak
 pen chinhuai mahmah hi.

☛ Unaupa Dongzathang-te inn-
 kuan leng unaunu Biakmawi Narela a
 hong kisan ziak in hiaillam ah hongpai
 uhi. Biakna mun apan gamla sim
 mahleh a vangkim a biakna a hongtel
 theizel uh lamet ahi.

KHATNA ANA LA

☛ Mr. Gin Paul s/o unaupa
 Khamthianmung in Delhi ah under 19
 badminton kimawlana ah khatna ana
 ngah ahihdan zak ahi. Congretulation.

AWARD SANG DIING

☛ Unaupa Samuel Thangdouliau
 in nasep hoih ziak in a sepna SBI a Del-
 hi circle pumpi ah CGM CLUB award
 2023-2024 sang diing in telkhiak in ana
 om hi. Etton huai mahmah. Khristiante
 hichih diing mah hi e.

SHILLONG LAM AH

☛ Sepna vai toh kisai in kal paita
 sung in unaupa Siamkhanmuan Shill-
 ong lam ah ana ziankhia hi. Amah zan
 in dam in hongtung kinkawnta.

MIN PIK THEIHTA

☛ Annual bible quiz kha nawn di-
 ing hita ahihman in a sai diing a seh
 unaute'n min pelut nawn siausiauta
 diing in ngetna leh theihsakna bawlta
 uhi. A pia leng omta. Unaute'n tel di-
 ing in min i pelut siausiauta diing uh.
 Min piak kia hilou in a sim kipan nail-
 oute leng sim kipanta diing in nget-
 na leh theihsakna bawl uhi.