

Jail House Religion

By Don Krow
(Discipleship Lesson)

Read the entire lesson and then answer the questions that follow.

One night, on the streets of Colorado Springs, I spoke to Mike. He reluctantly let me tell him about the person of Jesus Christ. He told me that he had turned to Jesus Christ at one time while he was in jail. Obviously, his one time faith of long ago was not yielding any real change in his life today. Why is that such a common story in so many lives? Why have so many one time professions of faith fallen away?

How would you like it if you knew that the girl you were about to marry was going to be untrue? Would you go ahead and commit your life to that kind of relationship? I seriously doubt that you would. Why? Because the essence of "marriage" is to forsake all others and to cleave in love to the one you've chosen.

Jesus Christ has likened the relationship to which He has called us to a marriage relationship (Rom 7:4). Some who have said "yes" to this relationship have remained true. Some have been unfaithful and are committing spiritual adultery (check it out for yourselves by reading James 4:4) Others have not even met the conditions to begin a relationship, although they thought they had. The Apostle Paul at one time asked some professing Christians, "Check up on yourselves. Are you really Christians? Do you pass the test?" (2 Cor. 13:5, LB). Jesus said not every one that has just said "Lord, Lord" would enter His kingdom (Mt. 7:21-23).

So what is necessary to have a lasting relationship? In any lasting marriage relationship we must forsake our adulterous lover and cleave to our spouse. If, in this relationship, we are unloving, wrong, or unfaithful, this is called a "transgression" against our "vows." At these times, it is required that we turn, return, or turn back from that which would hinder our relationship and ask for forgiveness. This is called "repentance." "Forgiveness" in any meaningful sense of the word presupposes guilt. Undoubtedly, repentance is specified as the condition of "forgiveness." What would you think if a man raped your daughter and said, "Please forgive me, but if I get a chance I will do it again." He would be asking for forgiveness while not turning from his sin and not seeing his sin as wrong and despicable. "Repentance" involves a change of heart, and a change of mind for the better. It turns from Satan to God and from sin to Jesus as the Savior and Deliverer from the penalty and power of our sins. This is not perfection, this is a change of direction. True Christians have turned to a new king and a new kingdom: for Jesus said, in Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters."

In Jesus' teachings and examples there are several instances of a faith that lacked true repentance (Jn. 8:30-38, 44, and Lk. 8:13). Let me give you just one example: "Now when He (Jesus) was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, MANY BELIEVED IN HIS NAME when they saw the signs which He did. But JESUS DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF TO THEM because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man for HE KNEW WHAT WAS IN MAN" (Jn. 2:23-25). Here we see many people putting some kind of mental assent or belief in Jesus, but Jesus would not commit Himself to them for He knew what was in them. In other words, the kind of faith that they had in Him was not a faith that was committed unto Him. So therefore, Jesus would not commit Himself unto them. Could it be possible, my friend, that the kind of faith that you

have put in Jesus is a non-committed faith that has been unwilling to go the distance? Jesus said that some people hear His word and receive it with joy but believe only for a while and fall away in the time of temptation (Lk. 8:13). Temporal faith is not saving faith (1 Cor. 15:2, and Col. 1:23). The Lord is longsuffering toward us and not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9). Would you be willing to turn or return to the One who loves you? Forgiveness is a relationship word and the goal of God's forgiveness is to have a relationship with you. Are you the lost sheep that Jesus would leave the ninety-nine for just to find you (Lk. 15:4-7)? He loves you that much.

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(Discipleship Questions)

Answer the following by reading the corresponding discipleship lesson and using your Bible.

1. Why do you think so many one time professions of faith have fallen away?

2. Read 2 Timothy 4:10. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia." Why did Demas fall away? _____

3. Read 1 Timothy 1:19. "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck." What two things did people put aside, ignore, and disregard that caused them to fall away?

4. Read 1 Timothy 4:1. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Some will depart, or abandon, the Christian faith because they give heed, or follow... (two things)

5. Read 2 Timothy 4:3-4. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; [4] And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Some people do not want to hear the truth. Instead, they look for teachers that will tell them what they want to hear. They turn from the truth to eagerly listen to

6. Read Hebrews 3:12-14. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. [13] But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. [14] For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." Some people harden their hearts toward God by the _____ (vs. 13).
7. Read 2 Peter 3:17. "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." Some people are led astray by the wrong crowd; 2 Peter 3:17 calls this being led away by the _____.
8. Read Matthew 24:12. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Because of the increase of wickedness, people's love for God shall become or grow _____.
9. Read Luke 8:13. "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." Some people believe for a while, then they fall away in time of _____.
10. Read Luke 8:14. "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." What three things choke the Word of God in people's lives?

11. Read John 2:23-25. "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. [24] But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, [25] And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." Temporal faith is not saving faith. Jesus gave several examples of a person's faith that lacked true repentance and commitment. What can we learn about commitment and faith from John 2:23-25?

12. Read Ezekiel 16:8. "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine," and 1 Corinthians 6:20 "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." God uses the illustration of marriage to describe a relationship with His people. Whose possession does one become in this relationship? _____
13. Read Romans 7:4. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Jesus Christ has likened the relationship to which He called us to a _____ relationship.

14. Read 1 Corinthians 6:20. "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Jesus bought us with His own blood. What part of us as believers belongs to God? _____
15. Find your answer in the lesson. "The essence of marriage is _____."
16. Find your answer in the lesson. "If we are unloving, wrong or unfaithful, this is called a 'transgression' against our 'vows.' At these times, it is required that we _____, _____, or _____ from that which would hinder our relationship (with God) and ask for forgiveness."
17. Read James 4:4. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Is it possible to commit spiritual adultery against God? _____.
18. Would you commit your life in marriage to someone that would not commit themselves to you? _____.
19. Read Matthew 6:24. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." No man can _____ two _____.
20. In the scriptures, a saving faith in Christ is described and a non-saving faith (mental assent) is described. Read James 2:19. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." Is James 2:19 describing saving faith or non-saving faith? _____.
- Read John 2:23-25. "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. [24] But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, [25] And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." Is John 2:23-25 describing a faith that saves or a non-saving faith? _____.
- Read Luke 8:13. "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." Is Luke 8:13 describing a saving faith or a non-saving faith?
_____.
21. Read 2 Timothy 1:12. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Was Paul's faith a faith that was truly committed to the Savior or a non-committed faith? _____.
22. Read Luke 14:28-30. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? [29] Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, [30] Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." Have you sat down and counted the cost to follow Jesus? _____

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(Discipleship Answer Key)

Do not look at the answer key until you have completed the questions.
Compare your answers with the following answers.

1. Why do you think so many one time professions of faith have fallen away?

2. Read 2 Timothy 4:10. Why did Demas fall away?
Because of his love for this present world that is, he loved the things of the world.
3. Read 1 Timothy 1:19. What two things did people put aside, ignore, and disregard that caused them to fall away?
Their faith in Christ and their consciences (they ignored their consciences).
4. Read 1 Timothy 4:1. Some will depart, or abandon, the Christian faith because they give heed, or follow... (two things)
(1) Seducing (deceiving) spirits (or devils), and
(2) doctrines of demons (that is, things taught by demons)
5. Read 2 Timothy 4:3-4. Some people do not want to hear the truth. Instead, they look for teachers that will tell them what they want to hear. They turn from the truth to eagerly listen to
Fables, that is, myths or senseless stories.
6. Read Hebrews 3:12-14. Some people harden their hearts toward God by the
Deceitfulness of sin. (verse 13).
7. Read 2 Peter 3:17. Some people are led astray by the wrong crowd; 2 Peter 3:17 calls this being led away by the
Error of the wicked.
8. Read Matthew 24:12. Because of the increase of wickedness, people's love for God shall become or grow
Cold.
9. Read Luke 8:13. Some people believe for a while, then they fall away in time of
Temptation.
10. Read Luke 8:14. What three things choke the Word of God in people's lives?
(1) cares, (2) riches, and (3) pleasures of this life.

11. Read John 2:23-25. Temporal faith is not saving faith. Jesus gave several examples of a person's faith that lacked true repentance and commitment. What can we learn about commitment and faith from John 2:23-25?

If you don't truly commit to Jesus in your heart, then He will not commit Himself to you.

12. Read Ezekiel 16:8, and 1 Corinthians 6:20. God uses the illustration of marriage to describe a relationship with His people. Whose possession does one become in this relationship?

God's possession

13. Read Romans 7:4. Jesus Christ has likened the relationship to which He called us to a **marriage** relationship.

14. Read 1 Corinthians 6:20. Jesus bought us with His own blood. What part of us as believers belongs to God?

All of us (our bodies and our spirits).

15. Find your answer in the lesson. "The essence of marriage is

To forsake all others and to cleave in love to the one you've chosen."

16. Find your answer in the lesson. "If we are unloving, wrong or unfaithful, this is called a 'transgression' against our 'vows.' At these times, it is required that we

turn, return, or

turn back, from that which would hinder our relationship (with God) and ask for forgiveness."

17. Read James 4:4. Is it possible to commit spiritual adultery against God?

Yes.

Would you commit your life in marriage to someone that would not commit themselves to you?

- 18.

No.

19. Read Matthew 6:24. No man can

serve two

masters.

20. In the scriptures, a saving faith in Christ is described and a non-saving faith (mental assent) is described. Read James 2:19. Is James 2:19 describing saving faith or non-saving faith?

Non-saving, demons' faith. Read John 2:23-25. Is John 2:23-25 describing a faith that saves or a non-saving faith?

Non-saving faith. Read Luke 8:13. Is Luke 8:13 describing a saving faith or a non-saving faith?

Non-saving faith.

21. Read 2 Timothy 1:12. Was Paul's faith a faith that was truly committed to the Savior or a non-committed faith?

Committed faith.

22. Read Luke 14:28-30. Have you sat down and counted the cost to follow Jesus?

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