

On Drifting Away From The Faith

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If we surveyed churches who declined in attendance because of COVID, we may find an alarming number of brethren who fell or are in process of drifting further away. I remember thinking a long time ago that should persecution arise in our country, and it was viewed as a crime to be a Christian and assemble with Christians, that this would test us to the core of our faith, and many would not look for a way to assemble but would find their excuse not to assemble.

Two kinds of brethren would emerge in such a picture:

- Those with faith to find a way because the Lord and the brethren come first (**Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 10:24-25**), and
- Those who would let fear rule over their faith (**2 Tim.1:7; 1 John 4:18**).

Persecution was not the only test that could do this. It turned out that fear of a virus could do the same thing. Fear ruled over faith and love in many cases and showed us what we really were deep down. The love of many waxed cold. Some could go to every public event, restaurant, ballgame, and grocery store but not to the church. They could find a way for every event but the church assemblies. Fear can justify very unreasonable decisions and becomes very inconsistent. It tested our faith and fear won in many cases. The church is more dangerous than other places? Other places are worth the risks? Did fear isolate us from our own families? Or just our spiritual family? Did we cut off family members who did not share our fear or just spiritual family members who did not seem willing to comply with the rules of our fear?

We need to evaluate how the test of fear either exposed a weakness of faith and love in us or provided the opportunity to prove how genuine our faith and love are. If we did not do too well in this test, how would we do under persecution? Fear comes in various forms and tests us. How well we do in smaller tests may very well expose a lack of faith for bigger tests of faith to come. The trying of our faith exposes “*genuineness*” (**1 Peter 1:6-7**) or exposes the lack of it. Did the test **prove** your faith genuine, making it shine brighter? Or did the light of Christ in you grow dimmer? Did you get **stronger**, or did you start drifting away from the faith in Jesus?

What would you have done if it was a crime to be a Christian? Would there be enough evidence to convict you? Let us each “*examine yourselves whether you be in the faith*” (**2 Corinthians 13:5**) or whether we let fear rule and cause us to drift away!

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