

General Topics :: How to live with apostates

How to live with apostates - posted by IssacharSon, on: 2012/8/16 22:15

Saints,

I am writing this to you all for your advisement. My heart is currently breaking because of a recent revelation that the folks I live with are "falling away" from their faith in Christ. In spite of constantly witnessing to them in Word AND Spirit, they are abandoning the faith.

When I say "witness" I don't mean waving a Bible over their heads or through self-righteous works, but with prayer, study, fasting, ultimate surrender of the will to the Lord, which manifest in faithful deeds of genuine love and service towards my fellow housemates. These people claimed to be Christians, already - and I just took their word for it.

Everything appeared to be so great as I started to see changes in the way they responded to each other; more acts of kindness towards each other, better management of anger, more instances of repentance, cleaner language, etc.

Well, recently a series of trials were introduced into their circumstances. The Lord made me available to help in every way that I possibly could, both spiritually and physically. His grace enabled me to provide encouragement, love, service, and practical application of His word to help meet whatever needs arose as trials approached. Their suffering became my suffering and by God's grace, He made me obedient to His will in helping them to endure the challenges they faced. It was oftentimes exhausting, but so worth it to see God be glorified in their lives.

I am being rather vague in my description of the circumstances here, I know. This is to bring more emphasis to the main point which is this:

I am so hurt beyond belief by their apostasy. All this time, they appeared to believe in the Lord until the trials came. As soon as their circumstances became unfavorable, they completely abandoned their faith in Christ and resorted to their wicked ways. One of them outwardly cursed God as being "useless" when hardships arise.

And they have started using filthy language again. I just go into my closet and weep. I could so clearly see the Lord working out the hardships in their lives, but they wanted...more and faster. Everytime something didn't go their way, they cursed God. And oh, how this angered me! How patient He is with us.

I feel like such a fool, saints. Here I thought that they were really getting to know the Lord through His Word. To know Him is to love Him, and I thought that their engagement with His Word would help them develop a love for Him, which would change their lives for the better and make them happy. I live with very unhappy and miserable folks. They ultimately believe in their circumstances more than they do the Lord.

Yet, saints it burns me up to see people treat God like this!!! These people take the Lord on a spiritual roller coaster. He is only any good to them when their own will is being done, not His. They accuse Him of being "useless" unless He is working things out to fulfill their desires. I am so angry and hurt! To sit down and study God's beautiful and holy Word with these folks only to see them blatantly curse Him after all this time, when things don't go their way. I feel like Caleb in the wilderness.

How can you be in God's Word and NOT be changed? Are they just wasting their time when their bibles are open in front of them? Was it just a power nap when their eyes were closed and heads bowed in prayer? How can they treat our Lord this way? I'm sorry, but it is impossible to have a relationship with the Lord and His Word and still be able to use foul language. One of my housemates has the foulest mouth and I thought she was being delivered of this through her encounter with God's Word. It was almost miraculous.

But now, that she has "given up" on the Lord - her nasty language and gossiping has returned in full force and it is revolting to say the least. It was more tolerable before she was exposed to the Word.

God help me. How do you live with and love people who have (proudly) fallen away from their faith. How does one suppress hatred for those who hate our Lord?

Help me out here...

Love-in-Christ,

KP

Re: How to live with apostates - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2012/8/16 22:42

Quote:
-----How do you live with and love people who have (proudly) fallen away from their faith. How does one suppress hatred for those who hate our Lord?

KP, you are in a difficult place and we will pray here.

When I read your post I was immediately reminded of something that Amy Carmichael wrote concerning a coldness that can creep into us when coldness is found in others we've ministered to...

Is the love of the years slipping from us? "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." - is that fading from our memory? "love never failieth" - is love failing now? Shall we find ourselves meeting lovelessness with lovelessness?

In such an hour a poem, now many years old, that expressed a desperate prayer, burned into words;

Deep unto deep, O Lord,
Crieth in me,
Gathering strength I come,
Lord, unto Thee.
Jesus of Calvary, Smitten for me, Ask what Thou wilt,
but give love to me.

Yes, ask what Thou wilt-any hopes, any joys of human affection, any rewards of love - but let not love depart. Nothing or dinary is equal to this new call; nothing in me suffices for this. O Lord of Love and Lord of Pain, abound in me in love: love through me, Love of God.

-from IF by Amy Carmichael

Re: - posted by Areadymind (), on: 2012/8/16 22:45

I was going to respond to this with "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Then I read Ron's post, maybe that is confirmation.

Re: How to live with apostates, on: 2012/8/16 22:51

Quote:
----- I feel like such a fool, saints. Here I thought that they were really getting to know the Lord through His Word.

And they were!

Don't stop praying for them, for a "Broken Reed will He not Break and Smoking Flax will not He quench".

People respond differently to trials.

If you knew me back in the day during my frustrations, I threw the bible up against the wall, I said all kinds of nasty things to Him, but He kept up with me. I cursed Him but I new later that He never charged me of what I said as anything, He knew that I was frustrated and my response was to lash out at the one that loved me. Perhaps this was His way of showing me that regardless of what I do, He is going to be faithful towards me by never leaving me nor forsaking me.

Seeing Him act this way gave me a greater appreciation for who He is, He is God. And God is Good. God is Love.

When I start to dissect those words, "God is love". I must remember that He is not a man that loves, but He is God. Love thinketh no ill towards its neighbour, even though that neighbour may kick his door down, thrash the people that are in it and yet all of that God returns with mercy.

Where iniquity abounds, grace much more abounds. This verse was meant for us, because we are going to need it when we fall into such terrible conditions.

Adam's work in us caused all sorts of problems. When we got saved, that cord was disconnected and we got hardwired into the umbilical cord of the Lord Jesus Christ our BRANCH. But just because we got saved doesn't mean that all of Adam is gone. The new life of Christ is now being pumped into us and it will take time for all of Adam to be cleansed out of us. There is a continual cleansing of the righteousness of God, cleansing out the old. This cleansing can be characterized as Chastening. When the rubber meets the road, it's going to hurt and people will get nasty.

I've gone down some bad roads many times in my walk with the LORD. These people love the Lord, they just don't understand His ways.

When my dad would punish me for my bad behaviour, I thought I hated him, when I got older, I realized that what he did for me was good. I needed that correction. Today I appreciate it.

The best thing for you to do KP is to pray for them and stand in the gap and make up the hedge that not one person becomes lost.

I had no one praying for me that I knew of when I was going through my tantrums, but they have you which is a mighty blessing to have. It's so good to have people around that love people.

Do good to them, be a light in their darkness so they can see their way back when they come to their senses that there is no reason why they should remain angry with God.

Oh if you only knew me, how I was angry with God. But God had mercy on me. I stand here by the sheer mercy of God, nothing else but by His grace. When I wake up tomorrow morning, I thank Him that He had mercy on me to give me another day to wake up to.

Let these people discover that for themselves. They will go down some bitter roads, some may recover, others may not, but like Paul said, "Turn such a one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that his spirit may be saved in the day of Jesus Christ".

That was a mercy call from Paul. That was wise counsel.

Let's hope and pray that that doesn't happen to any of these dear brothers and sisters.

Re: How to live with apostates - posted by SonsofLevi (), on: 2012/8/16 23:21

Hi KP,

"InTheLight" gave you a very good comment. I also would recommend that you get that little book called "If" by Amy Carmichael.

I truly appreciate your love for the Lord and your desire to see Him honored. It looks like God is being much more patient with your friends than you are. No doubt God put you there for a reason, perhaps that reason may include to teach you something as well as them. What I read in your post looked a little more like a testimony to promote your own righteousness than a testimony to the love and humility of our Lord Jesus Christ and the patience of God. Thus the Lord has to be patient with you as well as them. There is a principle which the Lord spoke about hating your brother, and it is murder by character assassination to promote one's own self-righteousness. Most of us have to go through that phase in our walk until the Lord breaks through the "natural man" and the fruit of the Spirit comes forth, which is love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

I hope you receive this with an open heart and mind, you will see that you will get along much better with your friends and perhaps glorify the Saviour, who was very patient with you and with me.

Re: , on: 2012/8/16 23:34

I don't have a whole lot to say, but maybe be encouraged by this. The Word that they were reading and taking in won't go void. I've personally seen people study the Word until they get shaken up, and then flat out reject it, only to later come back to repentance. One guy we were ministering to here decided that by studying the Bible, he was coming to "too much of an awareness of mankind's fallen nature" and he needed to get away from us and from the Bible, because of that (Kind of strange yeah?).

Eventually he came back though, because God wouldn't let go of him, and we continued to pray that the Holy Spirit would convict his heart by the words he read. He was gone for quite some time, though. Nothing is final until a person takes their last breath.

Galatians 6:9

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary

Isaiah 55:11

So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

Re: How to live with apostates - posted by learn (), on: 2012/8/17 0:45

Hi Issacharson,

They may or may not be genuine Christians. If they are genuine Christians, God will bring them back. (remember Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith and He who began a good work in us will finish it). However, it may last years as mine did.

Anyway this verses come to mind because it relates to pretty much who I was during my wilderness period with God (Approved, you and I have some (not all) similarities--LOL).

Psalms 73:21-22

When my heart was grieved and my spirit embittered,
I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you

Edit:

The way to respond is unconditional love. That's right. Unconditional love does not even think of like. It just loves in spite of whatever hurt they cause you. Even when they hurt you, you still want to be around them. This experience is to mold them (if they are genuine Christians) and you too (to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ). It's tough but it's necessary. That's why we are asked to give thanks in all circumstances because this is the will of God in Christ Jesus).

Anyway just my 2 cents worth.

Re: - posted by IssacharSon, on: 2012/8/17 13:10

What blessed counsel,

InTheLight wrote:

"When I read your post I was immediately reminded of something that Amy Carmichael wrote concerning a coldness that can creep into us when coldness is found in others we've ministered to...

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Yes, it was, I'm afraid. "Father forgive ME, for I know not...". I suppose I felt pride because I got to a place where I could no longer help them and my pride took it out on them. (Huff and Sigh!) - Most likely, thanks to your prayers, I had a "heart to heart" with one of my housemates last night and was able to share with her how much it hurt to hear her use curs

ed language because it reflects pain that I can do nothing about (pride again). She vowed to refrain from using the language and expressed that she wanted to continue studying God's Word. I won't hold her to it, but I will continue to love her, as you wisely advised. My love was waxing cold in response to their hatred. What a trap! Our conversation ended with a hug -which is a good sign, right? Perhaps, tonight our conversation will end with prayer, even better, yeah?

SonsOfLevi wrote:

"What I read in your post looked a little more like a testimony to promote your own righteousness than a testimony to the love and humility of our Lord Jesus Christ and the patience of God."

You are sooo right SonsofLevi! Infact, the Lord convicted me of the same when I went to bed last night and I wanted to jump up in the middle of the night and delete the post - but I'm glad I didn't, as it revealed my own sin. Thank You.

You all are so right in reminding me of myself. Ugh! How dare I expect anything from them beyond what God expects. Only He has the right to expect. And I should expect only on Him. And how easily I forget the patience and mercy He has shown and continues to show me. I remember being angry at God - though it is a faint memory.

You are ALL so correct. Thank you for praying for me. Believe you me, the Lord has delivered me through much, much brokenness and his patience is divine. I am very weak when I witness our Lord being offended. I suppose that I should learn from the tragedy of Peter's blinded zeal to "defend" our Master in the Garden. The very enemy which Christ's disciple lashed upon, was healed and restored in love by our Christ. Teaching that when we love our enemies, they cease to be such.

Thank You, Saints!

Love-in-Christ,

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Thank You, Saints!

Love-in-Christ,

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Re: - posted by SonsofLevi (), on: 2012/8/17 17:47

Hi KP,

Don't be overly hard on yourself, just keep moving forward. As I said, be sure God has you there for His purpose. Something the Lord taught me in the beginning of my mission was that The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven. It is a very vital education, perhaps the most vital of all, which is effected by contagion. It is given by touch rather than teaching. The most profound education is not that which has been most deliberately given. Though words are not entirely inefficient, they may only inculcate certain doctrines while they do not educate the soul. It is the vital touch which tells upon character, and most frequently this touch is not conveyed through the medium of the spoken word. The touch may be given in a very temporary contact. A passing incident may convey the vital force. Or the experience may be more prolonged. We may brush against somebody for days or weeks together, and although never a moral precept or a spiritual counsel passes between us, we come under the power of an extraordinary contagion, and our character appropriates the virtue or the virus of our fellowship. It is education by contagion. Our contagions are usually far more educative than our speech. Everybody is inclined to admit this on the bad side, but everybody is not so ready to admit it on the good side. They acknowledge that vice is contagious, but not virtue. They acknowledge that disease is contagious, but not health. It is more likely that one is just as influential as the other. A truly strong and nobly consecrated life moves in human fellowship with tremendous power of contagion. The weight of human impressiveness is measured by the reality of its divine communion with God. It is touching and influencing everybody with whom it deals, and the touch is always holy and wholesome. "He that believeth on Me, out of him shall flow rivers of water", and "Everything shall live whither the river cometh".

Re: - posted by IssacharSon, on: 2012/8/17 17:54

What a masterpiece, SonsofLevi!

You answered the question: How to live with apostates?

Infect them with Christ's love, yeah?

Love-in-Christ,

KP

Re: - posted by SonsofLevi (), on: 2012/8/17 17:55

That's it!